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THREE WOMEN

THREE WOMEN

St Teresa
Madame de Choiseul
Mrs. Eddy

BY

H. E. WORTHAM

Author of "Oscar Browning," "A Musical Odyssey," etc

"Love, thou art absolute, sole Lord
Of life and death."

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ST. TERESA AND THE IDEAL

SOME ASPECTS OF FEMINISM

L'Absolu n'est plus quiétude mais agitation ;
l'Eternel est devenu passion.

SAINT TERESA IN ECSTASY

Detail of the statue by Bernini, in the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome.

ST. TERESA AND THE IDEAL

I

THE Almighty has transmitted his partiality for mountains and high places to his favoured children. Science may trace back life to the primordial slime whence it first emerged above the waters; religion looking forward has set God above the mountain tops, and men, prone to symbolism, have persisted in thinking that on their heights they are nearest to the august Creator. "Mountains," says that prophet of the Victorian era who thundered against the sins of the people with no less magniloquence than his Hebrew predecessors, "have always possessed the power of exciting religious enthusiasm and of purifying religious faith." In his devotion to the Alps Ruskin was only following a fashion common to saints and prophets in all centuries. Moses sought and found Jahwe on Sinai. Monte Cassino stands as a memorial of St. Benedict, founder of Western monasticism. That of the East reached its most impressive development on the inaccessible peaks of Mount Athos. Both symbolism and inconvenience have helped to urge earnest men to the heights. They wished to remove themselves as far as possible from their humble origins in the primeval ooze, more present to their sensitive consciousness under the guise of original sin than to their less finely endowed fellows, and they wished to escape from the shackles that normal social intercourse entails. Even amongst those who take the biological view of life and reject that given to us by theology, the same form of intellectual snobbery persists. Mr. H. G. Wells sends his Samurai to the hill-sides with a faith not less simple than that of

the Christian anchorite. And a curious observer has pointed out that the high relative proportion of Jews amongst the residents of Hampstead is due to their possessing a higher spiritual sense than that of the Gentile population of London.

Among mountains that have played a notable part in the religious history of the world, Mount Carmel takes a distinguished place. Though we are not so familiar with the Old Testament as our forefathers, the relations between Elijah and that unsatisfactory monarch, Ahab, have escaped the oblivion into which much of the sacred books of the Jews have fallen. Everyone knows the story of Elijah on Carmel. Paradox that is the salt of life has enshrined the fierce old Hebrew prophet for us in the polite music of Mendelssohn, and Elijah, for the better part of a century, has remained the patron saint of our choral societies. In the Middle Ages it was not forgotten that he had slain the priests of Baal, even as the Prince Consort reminded Mendelssohn that he, too, had shown his fidelity to true Art though encompassed by the idolaters of the false God. But there were other reasons why, to the Ages of Faith, Elijah seemed peculiarly favoured amongst those who had lived before the Christian revelation. For one thing, a type of the Host had been given him in the cakes with which the angel had fed him under the juniper tree. And then he had shared with the much less picturesque Enoch the very exceptional privilege of escaping the pains of Death and the perils of the Judgment.

In medieval society death played much the same sort of rôle as the Spectre at the feast of Life that money does to-day. It was always in men's thoughts, and the hazards that lay beyond it coloured all human activities, so that Elijah, in not having to submit to this crisis for the human soul, had clearly enjoyed extraordinary merit. But most important of all, the reasons which caused Elijah to be enrolled amongst the saints of Christendom was the fact that he had

been the grand parent of monasticism. The current of monasticism in the Middle Ages united all sorts and conditions of men on its broad waters. The scholar, the idealist who now finds comfort in the tenets of Socialism or the activities of the League of Nations, the man or woman who wants a safe niche in the social structure, all these sought an asylum within the system which had been originated by St. Elias. And the proudest of all the Monastic Orders was the Carmelites.

Elijah had retired to Carmel with his fellow prophets. When God took him to Heaven his white mantle, charred by the flames of the machine, descended on Elisha, who wore it, streaked with black exactly as it was. The other hermits on Carmel, filled with a holy envy of their new chief, adapted their mantles to the same fashion, and the striped black and white cloak of the Carmelite friar in the 13th century was meant to give ocular proof to all men of the august origins of the Order. The Carmelites claimed, and still claim, that their foundation by Elijah was followed by an uninterrupted, or at least by a "moral succession" of hermits on the mountain. The traditions added many picturesque details; how Agabus had retired there after his hand had been refused by the Virgin Mary; how Carmelites were present at St. Peter's sermon on the first Pentecost and built a chapel on Mount Carmel in the Virgin's honour; how she and the apostles had enrolled themselves in the Order.

Not unnaturally these claims excited a great deal of jealousy amongst the other Orders, and the Dominicans in particular were accustomed to point out that there was no proof worth consideration of the Carmelites going back beyond Berthold of Calabria, who had founded the Order in the 12th century. The question was, in journalistic phrase, a topical one throughout the Middle Ages. It was discussed with the same sort of temper at the Universities that is now excited by the academic status of women. On

the whole the Carmelites had the better of the argument, or at least they commanded more partisans, and in 1374 the University of Cambridge, conservative then as now, forbade its members to question the antiquity of the Order. A much more serious situation arose in the 17th century when the Bollandists, approaching historical evidence with something of the modern spirit, declared the Carmelite pretentions to be groundless. Spain, resenting this as an affront on the honour of its beloved St. Teresa, put them on the Index. The Carmelites appealed to the Inquisition, the Bollandists to the Pope ; and the diplomacy of the Vatican settled the matter in 1698 by ordering both parties to keep silence upon it until a decision should be promulgated. The Vatican is still pondering the question, and those of the Carmelites who hold to their illustrious spiritual genealogy are in no wise lacking in obedience.

2

It was this ancient Rule, carrying the prestige of the great names it had counted amongst its adherents, that St. Teresa laboured to restore to its original purity, and in doing so became the most picturesque figure that Catholicism had produced since the death of St. Francis. No saint has more powerfully swayed the imaginations of the faithful during the past three centuries. Even the Bollandists, who would have robbed the Carmelites of the glory of their past, attempted in no way to detract from that of St. Teresa, and in their " Lives of the Saints " paid her the compliment of six hundred folio pages, the greatest number given to any one individual and exceeding the space together occupied by St. Jerome and St. Augustine, with the " Confessions " thrown in. By treating her life in this detail the Bollandists only followed the consensus of opinion in Catholic countries.

Teresa of Avila has been duly canonized by the Pope and her life and work have been awarded the

highest posthumous honour that the Latin Church can bestow. But she takes her place, also, in a wider Pantheon than that of which the Vatican holds the key. Those who own no spiritual allegiance to Rome recognize qualities in this Castilian that enlarge the stature of humanity. If she has been pronounced a great saint by those professionally qualified to express an opinion, the world has agreed that she was a great woman, and hence her perennial interest to succeeding generations, not least to our own which is preoccupied with the problem of woman's place in the social organism. Though the work of her life was the foundation of "reformed" Carmelite monasteries in which women, and later men, might retire more completely from the world, Teresa of Avila ranks high in the annals of those who have striven for the emancipation of her sex. She proved, under conditions much more difficult than those which faced her younger contemporary, our own Elizabeth, that a woman could show the highest qualities of leadership. Indeed she surpassed the English Queen, for whilst both could manage men, Teresa had far more skill in the art of managing women.

3

She was born into a society where only two careers existed for women. They could choose between marriage and the cloister. Neither meant to them what it does to us. Marriage was an austere affair, arranged by parents on a property basis and surrounded by none of the romantic glamour of love with which we, rightly or wrongly, have invested it. Unions between uncles and nieces were not infrequently found a convenient way of keeping estates within the family, and the petty nobility, to which St. Teresa belonged, clung to the established order in Castile with the same faith as to the established order in Heaven. A girl passed from the discipline of her father to that of a husband, to whom by the time

she was thirty she had probably borne nine or ten children. Her life was spent in the semi-seclusion of the family mansion under an obedience to a husband stricter and more unquestioned than that of the religious to her superior. There was more freedom and more health in the cloister, and the willingness of Spanish girls to take the habit may be explained in part by the same sort of motives that lead their English sisters of to-day to achieve independence at the typewriter or behind the counter. It is impossible to imagine a woman of Teresa's adventurous and creative spirit being content with the narrow existence of a matron of the small noblesse. "Her soul was restless and her sex weighed on her," a contemporary biographer remarks. "A gadabout woman, inventing wicked opinions under the cloak of devotion, disregarding the commands of her superiors and the injunctions of St. Paul, who ordered women not to teach", is the verdict of a sex-conscious male.

On the other hand she was happy in her time. To be a great saint requires just as much help from circumstance as to be a great commander, or a great composer. There have been many highly endowed saints, just as there have been many highly endowed musicians, but a Bach or a St. Teresa is a rare phenomenon only possible in the felicitous conjuncture of time and place. Great men make a great age; a great age produces great men. In the Castile of Teresa's time, that land of cavaliers and saints, the fine flowers of the religious life blossomed as naturally as did those of poetry in Tudor England. To a Spaniard Catholicism meant more than it did to a Frenchman or an Italian, though to all it was the repository of the common Latin culture they had received from Rome. For the Spaniard it was not only the patent of a historic national past, or the affirmation of an individual future; it had an all-important significance to him in the present, for it differentiated him from the Moor and the Jew. In fighting for the Cross the Spaniard had also been

fighting for his race, for his hearth and home. Its triumph in the century that preceded the birth of Teresa gave her the additional advantage of being able to work for the regeneration of Catholicism at large by attacking the growing laxity around her. The finer spirits were endowed with the qualities of an earlier time, and the threat of heresy within the Church drew its most zealous reply from Spain which, in the century adorned by Teresa, contributed a whole galaxy of saints to the calendar.

Teresa was also fortunate in her parents. Their more than reputable lineage helped to make the character and career of their daughter, whose humility was framed in a fine aristocratic pride. It has never been a disadvantage to a saint to be well-born, a quality that even the Founders of religions have not disdained to possess. Buddha was a prince ; Mohamed belonged to the noblest family in Arabia ; the King whom St. Teresa served was sprung, so far as his earthly genealogy was concerned, from the royal line of David. But she owed much to her parents besides nobility of birth. They were, in her own words, "virtuous and such as feared God". Her father, Don Alonso Sanchez y Cepeda, was an enlightened man, who in his disapproval of slavery, then an accepted feature of domestic life, stood in advance of his age. A man of strong character, he controlled his tongue as well as his passions. He was " exceedingly chaste " and, when his wife died, remarried within the prohibited degrees. His second wife, who was much younger than himself, bore him nine children before she too died at the age of thirty-three. This lady, Beatrice Ahumada, the saint's mother, found the task of uninterrupted child-bearing too much for her strength, and appears to have been a more or less chronic invalid.

In after life Teresa looked back on her mother with a certain hardness that was an important element in her nature. She understood far better the rigid austerity of her father. Her mother did not show

the same unfailing good example and had to practise petty deceptions to avoid her husband's censure. Yet she was a pious creature and "though she was very beautiful, no one ever heard she gave any occasion to the least suspicion, or that she made any account of her beauty". Her daughter adds quaintly that on her deathbed "her conduct was such as would have become a much older woman". From her mother St. Teresa first learned to say her prayers and to be devout to the Virgin. This, and her father's practice of reading books of piety in the vernacular in order that his children might understand them, drew the first precocious signs of holiness from the future saint.

Most children are bemused, some are terrified, by the thought of eternity. She and her favourite brother—Teresa had nine altogether, none of whom in any way "prevented her from serving God"—read in the "Lives of the Saints" of the eternal torments and glory of the next Life. They talked about it to each other and found delight in repeating the words "for ever, for ever, for ever". Life is an art and St. Teresa thus found inspiration for the moulding of her own in this early familiarity with the unending pains and pleasures of the world to come. But it is an art that no one quite masters, least of all the young. Teresa, clear-headed and intensely practical even at the age of seven, decided that since martyrdom was a sure road to Heaven, it would be better to avoid the dangers all must encounter in the world by leaving it at once through this portal. The price, considering the durable nature of the reward, was cheap. She and her brother, therefore, sought to enter, in her own phrase, upon immediate possession of the immense goods that Heaven furnished by begging their way to the country of the Moors and there joining the band of child-martyrs. They had not gone far through the streets of Avila before they met an uncle who brought the little girl and boy back to their parents. Tradition has it

that the boy, when blamed, laid the fault on his sister. She records that they found their parents the "greatest obstacle" to their project.

Foiled in this attempt, she had to be content with leading a hermit life in the garden, building cells that fell down as soon as they were put up, and playing at being nuns with the other little girls. She invested her play with all the verisimilitude that clever children can command. She gave alms. She sought solitude where she could pray undisturbed, and she tells us that her devotions were many. No genius in early childhood ever showed a greater singleness of purpose. Her precocity in holiness reminds one of Pascal's in mathematics and Mill's in philosophy. So she continued till her twelfth year, and when her mother died she threw herself before a statue of the Virgin and with tears asked her to be her mother for the future.

4

Precocity, however, is not always destined to ripen. With adolescence Teresa began to find new values and to discover that the world was a more attractive place than she had thought. Her mother had had one bad habit, the reading of romances, a taste indulged without the knowledge of her husband, who read only pious books. Had he but known, he would have forbidden both her and the children thus to imperil their souls, for these adventures of knight-errantry, at their best, treated of love after the chivalric fashion of the troubadours, and at their worst descended into a frankness of speech that would seem intolerably coarse even to this so-called frank age. The adventures of their heroes, which would have done credit to any modern American film story, were enveloped in an atmosphere that emphasized the supernatural as strongly as did the "Lives of the Saints". In the generation following St. Teresa's death, the greatest man of letters Spain has produced turned the batteries of his laughter upon their absurdities. Though Cer-

vantes used the solvent of his humour with greater caution than Rabelais had done in France, its aim was none the less against superstitions more widespread than the belief in the miraculous exploits of heroes like Amadis of Gaul and in the dark spells of necromancy.

These stories of knights-errant proved infinitely entertaining to Teresa. She read them unceasingly, and could not be happy without " some new book ". She even began to compose a romance herself. The change was marked, and when she took to arranging her hair carefully, wearing fine clothes, manicuring her nails and using scents, it looked as if Avila was to have one dark-eyed and dark-complexioned beauty the more. Regular features and good teeth, a vivacious manner and unusual power of conversation—all these impressed her contemporaries as the waywardness of her character at this time afterwards impressed herself.

She became very friendly with some cousins of her own age, the only visitors her father would allow her to see. With them she used to chatter of marriage and " other fooleries that are good for nothing ". An intimacy sprang up with one girl in particular, whom her mother had disapproved of. Her father and her sister, also deeply impregnated with the family piety, tried in vain to curb it. Afterwards the Saint looked back upon this friendship as coming within the definition of confederacies in vice which Dr. Johnson asserted to be the character of most. She enters into no details, but through her reticence it is possible to gather that she and her friend, with a third who is mentioned, helped by the servants, found the opportunity for boy and girl flirtations. Things, however, that would have passed as harmless and natural in a society which took a more genial view of social intercourse between the sexes, are likely to change their character when clandestine. Her father and brother discovered that Teresa was not behaving as befitted a young lady of her social

sphere, and the masculine mind decided that something had to be done, though in such a way as to cause no scandal. Luckily her elder sister was about to be married and it could easily be represented as unseemly that so young a woman should remain at home, unmarried and unduenna'ed.

Teresa, therefore, at the age of sixteen and in the first flush of her prime, was sent as a pensioner to the Augustinian Convent which lay without the walls of Avila. It was a trial for her father, who liked having her at home and believed no ill of his daughter, since, as she explains with her usual frankness, all her diligence had been directed to keeping things secret. To his daughter the arrangement was no less distasteful, and for the first eight days at the Convent she was very unhappy, in part because she believed that her escapades had been found out. But she was afraid, too, of God, and confession, to which she resorted as soon as possible, eased her mind. Her natural gaiety and wit also asserted themselves and she tells us that she was " made much of ". Evidently the event which had brought her within the Convent walls excited no opprobrium. Her confessor and the nuns did not discourage her thoughts from the marriage upon which her mind still ran. That personal fascination, to which even the most sceptical of her biographers have submitted, captured the imagination of the whole community, for no one with whom she ever came into contact could help loving Teresa. Even the Devil took particular trouble about her and sought to tempt her by messages and presents which she received from the outside world. But this was against the rules, and Teresa, left to herself, soon regained her former " good habits ".

5

So much for this incident of her youth. From the guarded way in which she writes of it in her " Life " it doubtless seems more serious than it really was.

In the Preface to her Autobiography she says regretfully that her superiors, at whose command she takes up the pen, did not permit her to mention " her great sins and wicked life " clearly and in detail. No one could write more lucidly than St. Teresa when she wished, and she has intentionally set this episode in the shadows. Its obvious importance to her status in the hierarchy of the saints has caused some trouble to her apologists. Bishop Yepes, her confessor and biographer, declares that the Saint never committed a mortal sin. Teresa, on the other hand, says that she never committed a mortal sin until she became acquainted with this girl cousin, who was the source of the ensuing evil. She adds that though her honour was smirched she used great diligence and circumspection not to lose it entirely. There is nothing more to be said, except that if St. Teresa had been a thoroughly good girl, as her pious biographers would have it, she would never have become a great woman. Most middle-aged people look back on their youth with a mixture of indulgence and irritation. They feel ashamed of the callowness which the years have cured, but they deplore their lost exuberance, which the same inexorable passage of time has robbed them of. Between the lines of this brief narrative of her salad days Teresa shows an agreeably human fondness for her lively youth, when she singed her wings in the flame of first love.

She had sown her wild oats, she had become afraid ; but it was to be long before the good grain sprouted. The poles of religion are fear and love, and any religion that does not base itself upon these two fundamental and primitive instincts rests upon sand. Fear is the rock upon which religion builds its superstructure of love. Love and hate—hate the reaction of fear—are different expressions of the same vital force. The one presupposes the other, just as good does evil, and light darkness. If we have lost the sense of fear in religion to-day, then we have also lost that of love. Nothing can be more illogical than to detract, as do

so many of our clergy, from the powers and prerogative of Lucifer. Hell is the necessary counterpart to Heaven, and any want of faith about the one weakens belief in the other. From Catholic pulpits one may still hear orthodox doctrine of the Judgment, but the robust Protestantism, well mixed with sulphur and brimstone, which enabled Spurgeon to paint Hell in such flaming colours, belongs to the past. The multitude cannot be expected to rise above fear. For them religion is this, or nothing. It is only in the few that religion kindles the living flame of love.

6

For none has this flame ever burned more brightly than for St. Teresa. Yet fear was the motive that first drew her to her destiny. In those years when she began to think and to feel as a woman, and for long after, Teresa, ultimately to experience the rapture of love in its most exquisite form, was the prey of fear. She did not yet possess the courage which she herself used to repeat was essential to a saint. The alternatives of the cloister or the world lay before her, and the choice terrified her imaginative mind. Her quick intelligence, as yet unheated by emotion, saw the dangers, the difficulties, doubtless the ennui, of either course. Marriage presented obvious hazards, as it does to all thoughtful people when their feelings do not prejudge the issue. The mortifications, and still more probably the petty routine of the convent when not transformed into an idyll of love and renunciation, as she herself was destined later to transform it, had as little attraction. In such a dilemma it was natural that by degrees her fear should induce her to choose the safer and the prouder course. Slowly she decided for the cloister, and then still more slowly she trained every faculty of her body to become the instrument of her fervour. Until middle age her faith was to be in essence egoistic and based on fear. Only after her climacteric did the passionate love that

places her in a class of her own amongst the great Christian mystics well up within her, and from the affianced of Christ raise her to the bride and spouse, incidentally spurring her into an activity which has left its mark on the whole of Catholicism.

Sister Maria Briceno, the nun who used to sleep in the dormitory set apart for the young secular ladies, helped her to make up her mind. When the Sister spoke to her of the dangers of the Judgment, Teresa listened—the more attentively because Sister Maria was a cultured and intelligent woman who talked well and Teresa liked clever people. The nun's influence grew, and Teresa had begun to look almost with equanimity upon the prospect of becoming herself a nun, when she fell ill, and suffered the first of those physical crises which were to have such an important influence on her life. She was nursed at home and sent as a convalescent to her married sister who, with her husband, lived the kind of simple, squirearchical life that Don Quixote led before his madness took him into the highways and byways of La Mancha. There she was happy, secure in the affection of her sister and her brother-in-law, who as she says "loved her much".

There she might have remained indefinitely if her sister had had her way. Probably Teresa, always responsive to the love of others, would have been willing to remain, had her father not wanted her at home. What is sure is that on her return to Avila Teresa stayed for a few days with an uncle, an elderly widower who had lost most of his money. The stern character and piety of her father's family had not been softened by these trials. His talk—and Cervantes has shown us once for all how easily the Spanish temperament runs to excess—was about God and the vanity of the world. He made Teresa read aloud to him pious books in the vernacular, a taste which he shared with her father, and the girl of eighteen, always anxious to please, pretended to enjoy them. This moment in Teresa's life has the momentousness

of tragedy. In those grim surroundings, listening to the conversation of an elderly and disappointed man, fear began definitely to incline the balance. The vocation was presenting itself as an ineluctable necessity.

Yet Teresa, always a person of common sense, calculated the pros and the cons. No young woman, faced with the decisions which young women have to take the world over, could have argued more prudently. The one sure thing in life was death, and when she came to die, which with her precarious health might be soon, she would " go down to Hell ". She had no illusions about the pains there to be endured. On the other hand, by entering the cloister she might be anticipating the sufferings of purgatory, but there was a good prospect that she would go straight to Heaven. Clearly the religious life was the " safest and the best ". Yet the flesh refused to be so easily overcome, and for three months Teresa, now a woman of over twenty and passing the age at which it was customary to become a bride, struggled with herself. At the end of that time fear, " servile fear " in her own ardent words, overcame the natural instincts of love which bound her to her father and the world. Fear had an ally in her health. The fever returned, accompanied by fainting fits and palpitation of the heart—the consequence, one supposes, of unhygienic living and of bad dietary amongst a people which has never properly understood how to feed itself. Finally, thoroughly overwrought, she decided to burn her boats by telling her father of her resolve. She knew that her Spanish pride would then never allow her to go back on her word.

But she was her father's own daughter, and he too could be obstinate. She entreated him in vain and persuaded others to entreat him with no better success. The most he would concede was that after his death she might do as she pleased. Obedience is the greatest of the Christian virtues, but he who learns to keep a rule must also know when to break it. There is a time for obedience and a time for disobedience : or

rather to Teresa the question posed itself as the choice between obeying her father or obeying God—and she chose God.

Not only was she determined to follow up her hardly won resolution, but with that desire for leadership which always marked her, she persuaded her younger brother Antonio to take the habit at the same time. Her father was carefully kept in ignorance until the pair, having concerted their plans, slipped out together from their home on November 2, 1535. The boy, who was only fifteen, accompanied his sister to the Convent of the Incarnation and then went on to the Dominican monastery. In her ruthless way she makes no further mention of her young brother, who, unlike his sister, did not persevere and ultimately became a soldier, to die in South America at the age of twenty-six. For the youth, so much younger than herself, who was obviously acting simply at her dictation, she had no word of sympathy; but she admits that her own feelings were worse than the agony of death as she left her father's house, for her father and her family she loved, God she only feared. With this sinking of the heart did Teresa set out on the great adventure of her life. Never were fears to be proved greater liars.

Teresa y Ahumada knocked at the gate of the Incarnation and the door was opened to her. She had shown her determination and made a gesture for all Avila to see, yet it did not mean that she had gained her ends, for the nuns of the convent had no idea of offending Teresa's father, and their poverty made it essential that the novice should bring a dowry with her. So they sent word to Don Alonso, who came at once to the convent, and realizing, as most fathers have to do sooner or later, that he must allow his daughter to have her own way, agreed to give the convent 200 ducats a year, a much greater dowry than a nun usually brought with her. From the first day of her novitiate, therefore, Teresa was marked out in this community of one hundred and eighty women, who

lived under the ancient rule of Carmel as mitigated by time and the wisdom of successive Popes. For in the wretched poverty in which the Convent of the Incarnation found itself—often the sisters had to be sent to their homes and relations as the resources of the convent could not provide food for them—a novice bringing so substantial an income was a person of importance. And she was outwardly happy, now that she had gained her desire. From the beginning "God was gracious to her". When she swept the corridors and remembered that at such times she would before have been thinking about amusements and dress, she was suffused with joy. Religion was a "delight". Particularly was she happy in the fact that she was now with Juana Suarez, the friend of her girlhood, whose presence at the Incarnation had been one of the reasons that influenced Teresa to take the habit.

Yet her happiness was not without alloy. Many of the novices whom she afterwards admitted to her own convents must have given more promise of saintliness than the future reformer of Carmel. She disliked being blamed when blameless, she sought solitude to weep over her sins and gained the reputation of being discontented. She had, too, a certain contempt for the nuns who took pleasure in minor religious observances which her robuster faith despised. There was always a strain of Puritanism in this most loyal daughter of the Church, who had no great opinion of set prayer and was never glib with the practice of crossing herself. The sisters, we may suppose, did their best to make Teresa at home in her new surroundings, and the story of how she playfully disputed with another nun of the same name as to which of them was to fulfil an obscure prophecy that the convent was to give a Saint Teresa to the Church originated possibly from their desire to stimulate the zeal and ambition of the novice. Not all the sisters of the Incarnation, indeed, could have been ambitious to become great saints. The convent was on something more than speaking terms with the world.

The nuns went out and received visitors beyond the circle of their own relations and sex. Into the convent parlours there flowed the social life of Avila and the sisters could enjoy the pleasures of conversation and other more unconventual delights without incurring the censure of their superiors.

7

In the environment of the Incarnation Teresa passed nearly twenty-five years of her life, rising by degrees out of its mediocrity to the heights from which she inaugurated the reform of the Order. But this was only after she had gone through extraordinary spiritual struggles and tasted extraordinary joys. The first stage in her spiritual growth occurred when she had been a year and more in the convent. Her health, unsatisfactory since adolescence, proved unable to stand the strain that the life put on her emotions and physique. The fainting fits returned, her heart grew worse and she was often insensible or comatose. Finally she became so ill that her father decided to take her away for a cure, which he did in the autumn of 1537, two years after her entry into the convent and a year after she had taken the vows. With her went her intimate, Juana Suarez. Whilst waiting for the spring, when she was to put herself in the unskilful hands of a woman quack with a local reputation, she stayed again at her married sister's. There, under the influence of a pious book, the " Abecedario Espiritual " of a certain Francis of Osuna, written to popularize the Franciscan mysticism which the Holy Office of the Inquisition always regarded with mistrust, she began to take her first steps on the road to perfection. It was characteristic of her independence of character that she should do this when living a secular life and far from her convent. At the Incarnation she had already won the " gift of tears ", denied her when she was at the Augustinians. She could weep as she meditated upon the Passion. But

now that she was able to pray in solitude, or with Sister Juana, and could practise the " recollection " which plays so important a psychological rôle in the spiritual growth of the mystic, real progress began.

With this book for guide she passed rapidly through the first two stages of prayer, stages that she has described minutely in her autobiography. She was raised to the prayer of " quiet ", which already bears a supernatural character, and even once or twice " for the space of an Ave Maria " to that of " Union ". As the fruits of this, she despised the world utterly and was sorry for those who followed in its ways. She might be humble, but at the same time no one ever had a fiercer pride in the dignity of her calling. Still a tyro, surrounded by the perils that the Devil sets for those venturing into the dangerous country wherein she now began to find herself, she sought advice from a confessor. The village priest at Castellanos de la Canada was naturally unable to help this strange penitent, who for the next twenty years was to be as difficult in the matter of finding a confessor to suit her as any wealthy invalid has ever been in the matter of her physician, and she was driven to rely upon herself and her spiritual A B C.

The grim winter of Old Castile passed in these tentative beginnings. Then in the spring, she was moved with as much comfort as the rough travel of the time would permit to Bazadas, where the quack woman healer lived. Her father, her sister, and Sister Juana Suarez accompanied her. But the drastic cure only made her worse. She became unable to take any solid food, and the pains in the region of the heart spread over her whole body. Fever, accompanied by daily purgatives for a month, left her more dead than alive, and for once in her life depression —" a deep sadness "—fell upon her.

Yet she could not have been more than a semi-invalid, otherwise she would hardly have been the instrument of saving the soul of her confessor, a reversal of rôles not unaccompanied by danger to a

young woman of twenty-three. At Bazadas she had been more fortunate than at her sister's in finding a priest who was well-born and intelligent. Her new confessor, like everyone else who came into contact with Teresa, was subjugated by her charm. The future saint, with a naïveté which it would be wrong to consider assumed, accounts for it by her having little to confess. And there was no harm, she says, in his liking her, though when that liking changed to something more definite the case became different; but Teresa told him plainly that she had no intention of seriously offending God, and he gave her a like assurance. On these terms their friendship grew closer than before. She spoke to him of her favourite subject, God, and he confessed to her his liaison with a woman of Bazadas. Teresa made enquiries and found that the scandal was of such long standing and notoriety that no one took any notice of it. She was naturally shocked, but she liked the man and continued to see him. When it appeared that the priest was not altogether to blame, since the woman—as the story went and Teresa naturally believed it—had enchanted him by making him promise always to wear a little copper image round his neck, Teresa showed him still greater affection and spoke to him more frequently than ever of God. He enjoyed these sermons, which she says did him good, though she admits that what really touched him was his love for her. She succeeded, too, where others had failed, in making him give up the image, which she threw into the river. Thenceforth the enchantress's power was broken, and the priest, helped by his great devotion to the Conception of the Virgin, was saved; at least, St. Teresa, looking back on this hazardous affair from the vantage point of middle age, asserts that he was then in the way of salvation. Since he died most piously a year after Teresa's departure from Bazadas, and had quite withdrawn from his previous occasion of sin, there is no reason to doubt her optimism. The combination of shrewdness and simplicity with which she

tells the story is inimitable. In addition to the curious light it throws on the liberty which the nuns enjoyed, for Teresa's father and sister must have been aware of the priest's reputation and of the interest that Teresa took in him, it doubtless helped afterwards to convince her of the dangers which could only be avoided by a strict enclosure. The lax priest of Bazadas can claim a share in the reform of Carmel.

As she only grew worse under the barbarous cure in which her family had pathetically put their faith, in July they took her home to Avila. There she remained with her father, suffering from a combination of nervous and physical disorders. Violent pains in the whole body were accompanied by a religious melancholy that induced her father, for all his deep piety, to prevent her indulging in too frequent confession. Even to him Teresa's anxiety for her soul seemed morbid. But he suffered the stings of conscience when his daughter, unconfessed and unannealed, suddenly became insensible. They thought she was dead; candles were placed round her bier, and but for Don Alonso the nuns of the Incarnation, officiously asserting their privileges, would have removed the body for burial to the convent, where a grave stood open for it. The Carmelite friars of Avila had actually performed some of the funeral ceremonies when, after four days, Teresa regained consciousness and once again opened her eyes on the world, not without difficulty, for the lids had been bespattered by wax from the guttering tapers. She had been into the very jaws of death, on the way to Hell, the horrors of which had been revealed to her during her trance. What with her own wickedness and the incompetence of her spiritual doctors, it was more than probable, she thought, that, had she died, Hell would indeed have been her portion.

For the moment, however, she suffered too acutely to grapple with the more serious problems of her soul. Her tongue was "bitten to pieces". She could not swallow, pains racked her, all her bones seemed out

of joint, and she could not move hand or foot. In this state she remained from the August, when the crisis had occurred, till the following March. Then she insisted on her removal to the Incarnation where she gradually improved, recovery being helped by her anxiety to pray in solitude, according to the counsel of the "Abecedario", a thing she could not do so long as she remained in the infirmary. Her frequent confessions and her converse about God edified the nuns—even under such physical infirmities Teresa had the desire to excel. Yet she felt little satisfaction, for though her conscience kept her from mortal sin yet she was not able to avoid the venial faults which sainthood must overcome. These caused her to shed tears of vexation; she cried, too, when she thought what little help she derived from her confessors. One can imagine how the good men, accustomed to hearing the confessions of nuns who had given way to the small temptations that lurk in the cloister, inattention or making a sonnet in choir, or gossip during recreation, found their ennui change to uneasiness as they listened to the outpourings of this young woman who analysed her thoughts and feelings with such command of words. They looked on her, doubtless, as an hysterical invalid, and tried to be helpful by absolving her with easy penances or even by telling her that she should not be too curious to mark down her venial sins. They could not understand her struggle between love and fear, love already insisting on the complete renunciation of self, and fear, in the guise of humility, holding her back from prayer, although only through prayer could she attain the love she desired. Looking back on her state at this time, she declared that the "ruin" which befell her was due to her wish for restoration to health—to us, and no doubt to her confessors, a perfectly natural desire. But in retrospect it appeared to the Saint sinful, for a greater love would have counselled complete renunciation. And when depression fell upon her she would reflect that, if she were

to be lost, her body had better remain in its shattered state, for the pains of Hell would then have less to rack.

8

If she were to be lost! The possibility seemed an awful one, and she decided that she must regain health in order to lead a life that would make her salvation reasonably secure. Casting about for someone to help her, she decided to ask St. Joseph's intercession. Had he not once been the Guardian of Christ and bestowed inestimable services upon the Virgin and the Divine Child? And would he not therefore have special influence in the counsels of the Trinity? Accordingly she besought the Spouse of the Mother of God, and thanks to him she was at last quite cured of the paralysis which had incapacitated her ever since the death-like trance she had fallen into three years before, on her return from Bazadas. This happened when she was twenty-seven years of age. St. Teresa for her part handsomely acknowledged St. Joseph's help. When she came to found her first monastery of the Reform, she dedicated it to him, and it was mainly due to her that his cult spread over the Latin Church, where it had never previously enjoyed any great vogue.

St. Joseph, she felt sure, had restored her to health; at least she had the full use of her limbs once more, for she never knew what it was to be really well. She suffered chronically from sickness, so that she could never take any food till after midday; pain often made it necessary to induce vomiting with a feather or an emetic before she could sleep at night; and she was afflicted with constant distress about the heart, though the fainting fits, common at one time, became rarer as she grew older. Yet her physical health was more satisfactory than that of her soul. Teresa for the next thirteen years was fated to live a life of mediocrity.

We cannot, of course, take her own condemnation of herself at its face value. All of us, saints and sinners alike, are ready to judge our past selves harshly at the same time as we adduce extenuating circumstances to salve our self-esteem. According to the standards of the Incarnation, she was pious and devout, and her reputation for holiness stood high with the other sisters. But then the standards of the Incarnation, though not so lax as in many convents, were low. "A monastery of women unenclosed is, for those who will be wicked, a road to Hell rather than a help to their weakness," she wrote, and added that parents would be well advised to keep their daughters at home, or even to marry them less advantageously than they had hoped, rather than put them in convents where they ran greater risk than they did in the world. In a convent a sister could err with less chance of detection, since the same kind of loyalty which exists in our public schools to-day ensured the silence of the others about her conduct. "Youth, sensuality and the Devil"—it would be surprising if this triple alliance had not possessed influence in a community of eight score women who said the offices by rote and had plenty of time and freedom to remain on good terms with the world. The sisters could go out and they could receive visitors in the conventual parlours. The Incarnation, indeed, played a definite rôle in the society of Avila, and while there is no reason to suppose that serious misconduct was common, the nuns were continually engaged in the social intercourse which Teresa discovered later was fatal to the flowering of the blooms of mystic love.

Thus the future saint, after St. Joseph had cured her paralysis, fell under the influence of the prevailing worldliness. She gave up mental prayer, excusing herself to her father, whom previously "by roundabout ways" she had induced to practise this holy exercise, on the ground that her strength was only sufficient to perform the offices in choir. Don Alonso believed her, for he always believed this favourite daughter

of his; but the ageing man showed his disappointment by cutting short his visits, saying that he was wasting his time. Yet prayer only required "love and the habit of it". This she knew, and she used her knowledge to force its practice on her companions, the desire to further the spiritual progress of others being "a most common temptation of beginners".

Teresa, afterwards, was hard on herself. Where other vanities pass, the vanity of a saint as regards his sainthood is difficult to wear away, and to the reformer of Carmel and the champion of enclosure, that other self, which had pursued undesirable friendships, appeared indeed a "very wicked person". One friendship of this kind caused Christ to appear before her "stern and grave". She did not heed the warning, nor did the apparition of a monstrous toad (in the language of mystical theology a real vision, as opposed to the imaginary vision which she had had of Christ) crawling towards her and the other person in the full light of noonday, cause her to break off the attachment. A nun older than herself, who could speak with the candour permitted by relationship, warned her also more than once without effect. Teresa could be precise when she wished. In this case she is sufficiently obscure for her biographers to have disagreed upon the sex of the friend since "*persona*", with which feminine noun the person is described, applies to either man or woman.

One notes, however, that though Teresa is at pains to emphasize her "worldliness", she is not less emphatic on the efforts that God made, despite her neglect, to bring her to himself. Somehow or other she had been chosen, but she had abandoned mental prayer and so destroyed the only bridge by which she might have regained the uplands of religious emotion on which she had begun to tread at Bazadas. For the rest, she lived the life of the convent. She fulfilled the conventual duties with a punctilio that caused her to be accorded more liberty than most of the younger sisters, though she was a poor singer and

was indifferently learned in her Breviary. But she never indulged in spiteful talk, whilst her liveliness, gaiety and wit, were all positive qualities making her a general favourite. She shone in the convent parlours as a *bel esprit*. Her tapestry work, her embroideries, some of which are still in existence, excited general admiration. In a word, she was a popular member of the community. But ambition was wanting, and without ambition there can be no saintliness.

9

In a life of this kind—a mediocre life leading to oblivion—the years of her prime ran out, and until she was past forty and on the verge of another period of bad health, Teresa remained the votary of a religion in which the mainspring was fear. She had entered the Incarnation, not because she was attracted by the austere beauty of the cloister, or drawn by a selfless love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, but that thereby she might make her salvation more secure. Morally she was on the same plane as the young woman who weds from motives of worldly advantage. She had taken the habit and chosen her bridegroom in Heaven on a calculation of profit and loss. True, she carried out her part of the bargain, as do the majority of women who act from similar motives, whether these lead them to the cloister or the hearth. But Teresa was not like the majority of women. Routine and custom might blunt her perceptions; they could not altogether anæsthetize her intellect. This told her that in the hive of the Incarnation, where women devoid of any lofty, or single, purpose tried to make the best of both worlds, the supreme lesson that life has to teach remained unlearned. Love and the renunciation of self—on these two facets of the same diamond that gleams from the forehead of Truth Teresa, little by little, concentrated all the faculties of her being. In the end her perfection was recognized, and God took her to dwell with him in the spiritual

marriage of his seventh mansion. But she had first to pass through a long period of espousal, during which she suffered torments that the highest natures alone are privileged to endure, and her spiritual nuptials were only to be consummated when she was fifty-seven years of age.

The story of St. Teresa's love is one of the most passionate and extraordinary in the history of the human heart, let alone in the calendar of the saints, and not the least remarkable thing about it is the deliberation with which it grew. She had reached the age of twenty-nine without having given evidence of any particular sensitiveness to emotion. A clever woman, she had managed to acquire that attitude of complacency towards her surroundings which is the best basis for contented existence, and she might well have continued to lead this humdrum life had not her genius always kept in sight those counsels of perfection that sway only the elect. An event which happened at this time marked a stage in her life. Her father fell ill and died. Teresa had gone home to nurse him, managing to disguise from the dying man that she herself was seriously ill. He made a most pious end, expiring whilst reciting the Creed, and his confessor, Vicente Baron, a learned Dominican, felt confident that he had gone straight to Heaven. Under the influence of this holy death-bed Teresa decided to review her own spiritual position. Always partial to learned men and to new confessors, she confessed to Father Vicente, and he sent her to Communion once a fortnight, twice as often as the Constitution of the Carmelites prescribed. Teresa continued to consult him as her spiritual director—every time she did so it meant a pleasant walk to the other end of Avila—and as she revealed more to him of her inner life he recommended her to resume her practice of prayer.

Catholic historians have emphasized the favours that God showed to St. Teresa. But these mystic favours could only be extended to her when she had

entered the region of the supernatural where alone they can exist, and the sole entrance to this religious hinterland lay through mental prayer and self-withdrawal from external things. Prayer came in the end to mean for St. Teresa the friendly intercourse between the soul and its Creator, by whom it knows that it is loved. Finally, after spiritual marriage, even prayer grew redundant, for then she was always conscious of the immediate presence of God, just as the highest expression of intimacy between two persons linked in affection is often found in silence.

At this time, however, prayer was essential to the future mystic, and Father Vicente Baron's influence marks a step in her career. Thenceforth she began to realize what was at stake, a dim realization, at first hardly more than a feeling of discomfort but rising by degrees until it amounted to actual pain. Through the decade that followed Teresa was unchanged outwardly. But within was taking shape the conviction that the love she felt capable of giving and receiving differed in kind rather than degree from that which she had hitherto shown or experienced. She was growing ready for the decisive change which, in people of a " salvationist " temperament, is usually completed by some sudden shock. For months, for years, the religious emotions are gathering head ; the self becomes ever more conscious of divided aims and incompatible loyalties ; the sense of sin bears down with increasing weight upon the mind. Then, all at once, the crisis occurs. It may be caused by something seen or heard, or it may be pathologically subjective, as in the case of that conversion on the Damascus Road without which Christianity would never have become more than a Jewish heresy, and suddenly the self attains a unity and an inner happiness never before realized.

IO

In the case of Teresa the shock was caused one day by her unexpectedly coming upon a statue of Christ

at the Pillar, which had been placed temporarily in the oratory for a festival. It is peculiarly fitting that the most Spanish of the saints should have been finally converted by one of those images which have played so important a part in the Catholicism of Spain. They have done so, not simply because the Spaniards, faced with the monotheism of the Moslem and the Jew which bans any representation or forms of men and animals and anathematizes any graven image, were impelled to the other extreme. On the eastern front of Christendom much the same kind of pressure led to iconoclasm. But the Spaniards have always had a bent of their own for the plastic arts, and a particular appreciation of the beauty of the human form which has shown itself, for instance, in their national cult of the dance. That feeling, heightened by the intense Catholicism of Spain, caused images to be regarded with a fervour which St. John of the Cross, Teresa's disciple, afterwards saw fit to blame. These images, as a rule, illustrated the humanity of Christ, showing with a stern, unflinching realism the pain and suffering of the Passion. It was a garish and realistically painted figure of this kind which caused Teresa to experience that feeling of " oneness " typical of conversion ; suddenly finding herself face to face with this figure of the Christ, bloody and torn with pain, she fell at its feet and begged with tears for strength to offend no more.

From that moment her life was changed. More than changed ; it ceased to be her own and henceforth it was that which God led in her. " I live now—not I—but Christ liveth in me." Gone was the old stubbornness of will. No longer had she any difficulty in giving up converse with secular people. The secular " friendships " were pursued no more. The reward came at once, and her new-found fervour was crowned by favours that God began to show her. " The Confessions " of St. Augustine, a personality temperamentally akin to Teresa's, which had just been translated into Spanish, helped her to devote

herself entirely to the divine love that now called her. But the course of her deepened spiritual life did not run in a broad and well-charted channel. The Catholic soul in the middle of the 16th century could not command the skilled diagnosis, the sure treatment, which has been provided for it since Catholicism at the Council of Trent resumed its missionary career; and though now deep within her she felt the happiness which the sick soul knows after conversion, Teresa was still afraid. The supernatural favours that she had received included that of the mystic union, unmistakable both in its duration and its repetition. From this state she had emerged feeling better in soul and stronger in body, a clear sign that God had sent them to her.

It was clear at least to her, but not so clear to others. Special graces (as no doubt her fellow nuns, who might not be without jealousy, pointed out to her) should only flow as the result of special virtues. Teresa's life hitherto had not been one of any exceptional sanctity, and at the same time she had this desire to excel which might easily be a form of spiritual pride. Quite possibly the Devil, discovering her weakness, had made her the victim of his diabolical illusions. The doubt distressed her. She was a woman of courage, yet there were implications in the business that would have alarmed even the bravest, for apart from the distress of mind that such suggestions caused, personal danger and disgrace loomed up in the background. A few years before, the prioress of a convent in Cordova, a wretched woman who had been an epileptic from childhood, had been condemned by the Inquisition and burnt alive for professing to have experienced raptures and received revelations. The Holy Office was well aware of the dangers that the Faith ran from the excessive zeal of neurotic women. It had a keen ear and a strong arm, and a nun who believed that she had been singled out for exceptional favours at the hands of God might easily attract its attention.

Faced with this situation, and distrustful as ever of her own confessor, Teresa decided to seek other advice. She consulted two men of Avila, one a priest, Father Gaspar Daza, the other a man of rank, Don Francisco de Salcedo. Both of these became afterwards her willing allies and supporters, but at the moment they were the reverse of helpful. Father Gaspar, to whom she explained her state, though not in confession, " ordered the affairs of her soul", she dryly remarks, " as if she ought to be perfect at once ", and she added this friend of hers to the long list of incompetent ghostly advisers from whom she suffered. Don Francisco, to whom she turned next, was even more sceptical. Her methods of prayer through which these exceptional graces and sweetness flowed—could she explain it ? No : Teresa was obliged to admit that she did not understand it herself, and that being so how could she explain it to anyone else ? The Don retired and talked the matter over with his friend. Since there was no secret of the confessional to violate, they seemed to have talked until all Avila was aware that Teresa y Ahumada was the object of special attention from God or the Devil. Then the pious Spaniard returned to Teresa and " in great distress " told her that in their opinion she was being deluded by an evil spirit, and that the best thing she could do was to consult one of the Jesuit fathers, who had recently established themselves in Avila and whose reputation for learning stood high. He impressed upon her the importance of following the Jesuit confessor's advice down to the smallest particular, and of not deviating an iota from anything that he might command. Don Francisco was alarmed, not only for the state of her soul, and Teresa was not unnaturally as much distressed. Yet even at this critical time she never lost faith in herself. She was sure she was right, whatever men might say. And whilst praying in an oratory her confidence was strengthened by her eyes lighting on St. Paul's words that God would never permit the Devil to deceive those who truly love Him.

II

If public opinion in Avila expected that Sister Teresa's marks of grace were to be condemned as the result of what Mrs. Eddy, three centuries later, would have described as malicious animal magnetism, it was disappointed. For the Jesuit Father, Juan de Padranos, realizing that the provenance of such favours must be judged by their fruits, which in this case were obviously good, encouraged her to continue with the same method of prayer, and charmed by her personality even went so far as to prophesy her future greatness. Such special marks of divine grace must surely be intended for a chosen instrument. But the Jesuit advised additional mortifications. Hitherto Teresa, owing, as she says, to her weak health but we may also imagine because of her sound common sense, had indulged in no excessive disciplines. The Jesuit, strong in logic, pointed out that her ill-health might have been sent from God because she had neglected these penances. So Teresa, taking him at his word, conquered her natural repugnance and flagellated herself " even unto blood ". There came a time when her soul, inflamed by the divine love, was oblivious to the sufferings of her body.

The modern mind finds it difficult to take a dispassionate view of flagellation, which in England is now almost extinct even in its last stronghold, our public schools; an Englishman finds it difficult to mention the subject at all, for flagellation is one of those things that the Puritan conscience has discovered to affect the erotic impulses and has therefore labelled as wicked. It is, of course, true that flagellation, like anything else which gives tone to the system —fresh air, good food, the influence of great works of art—may seek an erotic outlet. The fact remains, as the ancients knew perfectly well, that flagellation, properly administered, is a tonic both to the tissues and the nerves. Galen used to recommend it to certain classes of patients, and flagellation had a

recognized place in the religious ritual of the pagan world and is practised amongst the Shiah Moslems to this day. To attribute to it, as certain French writers on St. Teresa have done, no power but that of inflaming the sexual appetite is mere boulevard science. Whether the Reformed Carmelites still follow their Foundress's injunctions in this matter and discipline each other on the bare body, every Friday, I do not know. But if not, it is certain that something of the tenseness of the life that Teresa wished to see led in her convents has been lost.

This good fortune in finding at last a confessor who understood her, filled Teresa with an admiration for the Jesuits which lasted all her life. She became their staunch supporter, and these soldiers of the Counter-Reformation, seeing in her qualities a counterpart to their own, were ready later to help her schemes for the reform of Carmel. It comforted her at present that she had at last begun to make spiritual progress, and with feminine logic she thanked God who had given her grace to be obedient to her confessors. Yet still one trial remained, one relic was left of the "servile" fear which had played so large a rôle hitherto in her spiritual life. Her confessor had ordered her to resist the divine sweetness now being sent her in such plenty. Being obedient she did her best, but it was to no purpose. She tried in vain to fight against the approach of these supernatural states. The only advantage of her confessor's command was that God, who apparently had as little faith in his doctors as Teresa, "taught her Himself" the lesson that she could not resist the divine favours. And when Francis Borgia, once Duke of Gandia and a grandee of Spain, now Superior of the Spanish Jesuits, visited Avila and at the instance of Father Juan went to see this remarkable nun of the Incarnation, he advised her to hold out against them no longer. A life's experience devoted to the State and the Church enabled this influential man to see at once that Sister Teresa was of fine mettle, and that she

should be encouraged to advance in the path that she had chosen.

From this time Teresa, now in her forty-third year, was able to conquer fear; for the future her inner life was to consist in the flowering of divine love. There have been other mystics more intellectual than St. Teresa and endowed with a literary power not inferior to hers; but none who have been able to describe their experiences in language at once so simple, and so graphic. Her "Life" and its pendant, "The Interior Castle", are amongst the most passionate works in European literature. The sincerity of the feelings they describe comes home to the reader on every page, even though they be the pages of a translation and the reader does not share the faith on which they are founded, for as he follows the adventures of her soul in its quest of the ideal love, he realizes that St. Teresa, rigid Catholic as she was, transcends the creeds and the dogmas of institutional religion, and that she is one of the great spirits of humanity.

The locutions, visions, raptures, ecstasies, which were a regular feature of the Christian mystic's experiences, and now fell to the lot of St. Teresa, have been explained by medical science as suggested and hypnoid states, based intellectually on superstition and physiologically on degeneration and hysteria. This, however, is only stating in the cant, scientific phraseology of to-day what the 16th-century Spaniard would have dismissed with equal impatience as the work of the Devil. True, the men of that time had no general synthesis of cause and effect such as colours, however vaguely and erroneously, the modern attitude towards life. They knew little about physiology, less about psychology and nothing at all about the working of the subconscious mind which has, perhaps, been one of the most fruitful fields of man's study of himself in the past fifty years. They were unaware of the power of Nature and of the strange revenges it may take upon those who starve the instinctive

appetites of the flesh. But they knew that men, and more especially women, who allowed their minds to dwell on a single idea were liable to become the slaves of their hallucinations, and they recognized that such hypnotic states were bad for those who experienced them. The case of the Prioress of Cordova was by no means unique. Amongst a people where, from the King downwards, the saintly life was regarded as the noblest man could lead, the aspirants after sainthood were numerous. It was a way of obtaining fame, or notoriety, and those who believe that in every age the general sum of human virtue remains much the same will realize that the greater number of would-be saints in Catholic Spain could have had no serious claims to such a title. Sainthood had become commercialized. Just as publishers now are only too ready to boast that they are bringing out a masterpiece, so religious houses then found the temptation strong to exploit any signs of sanctity which might bring the faithful's offerings to the common chest. The lust after relics, which caused St. Teresa's body to be torn to pieces in the generation that followed her death, is one of the ugly stains that disfigured the life of Western Europe when its activities were controlled by the Church. If a saint's bones or clothing were not to be obtained, a nun, or a monk, who saw visions and dreamed dreams, might prove a very present help to the poverty which prevailed amongst the monastic establishments of 16th-century Spain, a poverty that offered a serious problem to those responsible for order and government.

This was perfectly well known to the men of the time, and many of the best brains exerted all their ingenuity to draw the distinction between what they considered to be true and what false, revelations. If the ignorant were ready to accept such things at their face value, those who controlled the machinery of the Church were not. Since such men were faced with the same problem which confronts the investigator in this field to-day, that mystical experiences

are a purely subjective phenomenon and that as their authority is confined to the person undergoing them, the test of their supernatural origin, it was agreed, must be taken from their results to the individual. They were judged "by their fruits, not by their roots". The visions might be perfectly orthodox, the locutions such as might have come from the mouth of God. They were none the less false if it appeared that the person experiencing them showed any deterioration of the faculties, either physical or moral. Even so, the tendency was to give the Devil the benefit of the doubt, and during the next few years, whilst enjoying mystical experiences of the most esoteric nature, St. Teresa often fell under the suspicion of her friends as being the victim of the Devil's wiles.

12

HAVING laid the foundations of her spiritual state in prayer, now "solid like a house", Teresa had established that moral union with God to which, she said, every Christian could reach and beyond which few could expect to pass. Further progress was unattainable by the human means of mortification and excessive austerity, and must be looked upon, in her words, as neither a merit nor a reward but as the simple gift of God. Nor, in her opinion, should anyone attempt to procure such favours which in any case could only come through prayer. The quest of the "absolutely real and good and beautiful" lay open to all, but few could hope to penetrate through the darkness to the light beyond. Enough if gleams of the infinite gave them the assurance that on another plane of existence they would see clearly. Prayer, prayer, was the first and the last duty of the religious —of the woman who could not go out into the world to fight for the truth; and for Teresa prayer was synonymous with a self-withdrawal most easily practised in solitude, though in time the habit might become strong enough to enable it to be achieved

anywhere. An indispensable preliminary was the contemplation of Christ's humanity and the realization of his actual presence. But prayer was hindered rather than helped by any set form of words, except possibly the Paternoster. She would have had little patience with the piously redundant litanies in the vernacular which Catholicism, striving ever to hold the masses, has in these days of diffused education issued with so lavish a hand. One of the first things that Teresa insisted upon with neophytes in the convents of the Reform was that the Mistress of Novices should instruct them to give up the vocal prayers which they had previously repeated. Help in concentrating thought, will and feeling upon the single point of the sacred Humanity was gained by fixing the eyes upon an image of Christ, and using that as a frame through which the eyes of the soul could look upon the Bridegroom. With such training the thought of the Consoler as always at hand should by degrees become habitual. If she were joyful, Teresa used to think of him as emerging from the tomb in the full beauty of his manhood and her thoughts would concentrate on this until she trembled with delight: if sad, she dwelt upon the Passion in the Garden or on the Via Dolorosa. Christ would then turn towards her his eyes darkened with tears and in consoling her pains forget his own.

Such was for St. Teresa the prayer of quiet, which led the subject to the threshold of the supernatural, a form of contemplation clearly verging on hypnosis. Nothing, she says, is necessary for the soul in such a state except to enjoy its sweetness "without making any noise". The beginning of all good things, it is also an end in itself. And yet, for the courageous and pilgrim soul it is so close to the fire that the smallest breath may excite the flame, the smallest spark light the consuming passion of divine love, and once this has been kindled the votary, to change the metaphor, is embarked upon the uncharted seas of mysticism.

Not altogether uncharted, indeed, for the Latin Church, with its genius for order and government, has taken this religion of the spirit under its wing, and Catholic writers on mystical theology have carefully differentiated the various stages of the supernatural life. Though the layman finds it hard to detect objective distinctions in many of these classifications, there is no difficulty in remarking various clearly defined planes in the Teresan mysticism. The lowest borders closely upon the prayer of quiet, and is a form of contemplation which is only distinguished from the other state by the forcible closing of the eyes and a great numbness of the will. The faculties are still able to function though the impression left upon the mind is that this mood of sweetness combined with a feeling of remoteness is sent by a higher power. In the further development of this state, the soul, which psychology would re-name the field of marginal consciousness, seems to expand to an extraordinary degree and to taste inexpressible delights in which the body shares, or rather which the soul communicates to the body. The feeling of pleasure is exquisite, as if perfume were being poured over the core of the ego, or the marrow of the soul injected with a delicious ointment. The bodily functions meanwhile have ceased to act; the nerve centres are temporarily paralysed, talking is difficult, or impossible, and it may "take an hour to repeat the Paternoster". We are here at the beginning of a whole gradation of sensuous delights which appear to surpass any pleasures of sense known to normal consciousness. The mystic, or at least the Catholic mystic, has taken the vocabulary of human love and found it insufficient to describe the sensations that are the mystic's reward for having renounced the world and the pleasures of sense, though none have come nearer to success in this literary achievement than St. Teresa.

Teresa passed through these states to experience the full union that comes in the "fifth mansion", or the "third water", to adopt her own elaborate

allegories which she uses in "The Interior Castle" and her "Life" to describe the adventures of her soul. In the full union the contemplative, grown expert in detachment from what the author of the "Imitation" calls transitory and created things, becomes one with God, one with the Absolute. Teresa describes in her vivid language how, during the short time that this state lasts, the soul is deprived of all feeling whatever. "It seems to have left its mortal covering to abide more entirely in God." So complete were her trance-like states at these times that Teresa believed she ceased to breathe whilst under their influence, and at the same time her mind, trying to concentrate and understand what was happening, knew that this comprehension was beyond its power. "It is so astounded that if consciousness is not entirely lost, at least no movement is possible and the person can be compared to one who falls into a dead faint from dismay." Thus St. Teresa writes of the subliminal region of the consciousness in which the Bridegroom is present to the beloved soul, the mere sight inflaming it with such love that it does everything to prevent the union from being severed and in a moment grasps things which would take the senses years to understand.

13

All this far from exhausts the recital of the experiences which befell St. Teresa in the course of this extraordinary spiritual Odyssey. Her first rapture occurred when she was forty-three, a date that has not passed unnoticed by those who have concentrated on the pathological side of the Saint's career. In this rapture a voice told her that for the future she should converse not with men but with angels. Subsequently they became of frequent occurrence and did more than anything else to spread abroad the report of her sanctity, since, to the vulgar, these bore more obvious marks of the supernatural nature of mystic

experience. During the four years of her life at St. Joseph's, when she was in the thoroughly congenial and intense atmosphere of the Convent of the Reform which she had founded, raptures not infrequently fell upon her after communicating. On such occasions her limbs became rigid, and she remained motionless in the posture, whether kneeling or standing, in which she was when the spirit came over her, though it sometimes happened that she would be seen to rise into the air. Teresa herself laughed at these pious fables. But the nuns repeated how, when the Bishop of Avila was once celebrating Mass in the convent, the spirit thus raised her from the ground—a phenomenon which the Bishop, himself a profound believer in the Saint, might not have observed owing to the grill that separated the sanctuary from the choir—and again on another occasion when the holy mother and St. John of the Cross, the most gifted of her spiritual children, were conversing together at the parlour grill, both became so inflamed by the divine love that their bodies, spurning the sinful earth, were seen floating in the air.

There was no time when St. Teresa might not be thus visited. Rapture and levitation in its train came even to her when she was cooking, and she was once observed by one of the sisters to be suspended between ceiling and floor whilst still holding the frying-pan in her hand. These raptures used to be accompanied by violent pain, so sharp as to seem mortal and lasting for hours, and even days, afterwards. Their moral effect, however, was always good. They were powerful generators of new spiritual energy, as her description shows: "Often infirm and visited with dreadful pains before rapture, the soul emerges from it full of health and ready for any action. The soul after such is animated by a degree of courage so great that if, at that moment, the body should be torn in pieces for the cause of God, it would feel nothing but the liveliest comfort." Teresa asks, with that assurance which only the mystic knows, what

empire is comparable to that of a soul who, from the sublime summit to which God has raised her, sees all the things of earth beneath her feet and is captivated by none of them—the soul then laughs that there should ever have been a time when money seemed a desirable thing. Suddenly the Saint turns aside, and with the Spain before her into which was then pouring the wealth of the Americas, she exclaims : " Oh, if human beings could only agree together to regard it as so much mud, what harmony would then reign in the world."

Beyond the trance, or rapture, lay the transport, the ecstasy wrought in the innermost part of the soul with such swiftness that " the ethereal part of it " seemed to be carried away and the spirit to leave the body. Besides the exquisite exaltation of love, the soul in such a state felt wounds and pain which " penetrated to the very entrails ". Yet the pain was sweet, sweeter far than the intoxicating joy of the union of quiet, in which there was nothing but joy.

On such occasions St. Teresa was accustomed sometimes to see an angel at her side, holding a fiery spear of gold in his hand, with which to transfix her heart. The miracle of the Transverberation is the incident in the Saint's life which has most struck the imagination of the faithful, and the wounded heart, preserved in the Carmelite convent at Alba de Tormes, where St. Teresa died, is shown as a precious relic of the Saint. The incision is plain enough ; and by the accepted canons of medical science it would cause instant death. In the light of the conflicting and doubtful evidence of the heart's removal from the Saint's body, however, judgment may be at least suspended in interpreting St. Teresa's account literally. The Latin Church has never been over nice in its good manners when it was necessary to impress the people. There is absolutely nothing to show in St. Teresa's own writings that she believed that her actual flesh had been thus pierced ; on the contrary she distinctly states that she saw the cherub

in an intellectual vision, and though intellectual spears may wound the mind, they do not penetrate the mortal body.

Finally St. Teresa, to crown this spiritual progress, was destined at the age of fifty-seven to know the profoundest joys of all, the joys of the mystical marriage. Henceforth her love was complete. She then exchanged the strain of the mystic union, always uncertain and often brief, for the broad, deep waters of spiritual matrimony, where she knew the Divine Husband to be always present. Thereafter she was to feel no more transports and raptures, to undergo no more aridities. All these would have been as much out of place in her exalted state as the trifling endearments of human lovers after these have tasted the sobering happiness of marriage.

The comparison suggests itself naturally. But it is well to remember that metaphor remains metaphor, however vividly and insistently it may be used, and that all this sensuous imagery, which caused William James to speak of Teresa's idea of religion as an endless amatory flirtation between the devotee and the Deity, describes states which are only possible to those who have the strength of character to submit to an austere and ruthless discipline. It would be absurd to deny that the ecstatic mystics are not repaid, here and now, for the pain and torture they inflict on themselves. They have a reward on earth as well as in Heaven. They have given up everything, and the one thing left outweighs all the rest. If a hedonometer could be invented to measure pleasure and pain, the mystic's mean, one imagines, would be higher than that of the normal person. A mystic might thus justify himself according to the strictest canons of the Benthamite philosophy. But this is not to say that the experiences of a St. Teresa are the reactions of sexual instincts which have been diverted from their natural channel. If Teresa y Ahumada had married and been the mother of children she could hardly have become a mystic in the full sense of the word, for she would

have been unable to secure the preliminary conditions of quiet and self-withdrawal necessary for her initiation. Mysticism is a mode of knowledge, and requires time and application.

The fact, too, that in a votary like Teresa mysticism is accompanied by functional derangements proves little more than the intensity of her vision. Admittedly she was not a healthy woman, but then Beethoven was not a healthy man. Her emotions were as intense as they were unstable. In her great aridities, those drynesses with which the majority of creative artists are only too familiar, she used to lose almost the recollection of God. Loss of memory so complete would come over her that the advice of her friends, the divine locutions, even the familiar prayers passed out of her mind. For two or three weeks it might happen that she would be unable to concentrate her attention or to understand the simplest things. Sometimes she was so out of humour that the presence of others grew insupportable. Apathy, " a sort of stupidity ", might then overcome her and she would be insensible to grief or consolation, pleasure or pain, life or death. Such were the depths to which she might sink. The symptoms point to neurosis. But so do Tchaikowsky's periods of despair, and Beethoven's mood when he penned his " Will ", and Mozart's hallucinations during the closing months of his life. Yet the Fifth Symphony, or the Requiem, has never been subjected to a clinical diagnosis. And if occasionally Teresa was cast down by the depression of ill-health and disordered nerves, so that for the moment she had the desire of the sick animal to be alone, she only appears the more human and lovable. No one has been more harmoniously endowed with qualities which cover such wide fields of human activity. She holds the imagination of posterity as a mystic. But she was, too, a woman of unerring judgment, who fought for the cause she had at heart with a courage, devotion and, one should add, gaiety, that was heroic.

These occasional discords add to the harmonic richness of a character which was equally well endowed for contemplation and for action. The theory that the mystic is also likely to be a person of more than average shrewdness in worldly matters, though it cannot be supported by the evidence shown in the annals of Christian and non-Christian mysticism, has St. Teresa as the classic example of a dual personality which was equally at home on both planes. It is by her adventures in mysticism that she holds the imagination of posterity. But she handled life, too, in a way that marks her as a woman of consummate courage, cleverness and charm, qualities she was soon to need in the active career that now loomed ahead of her.

14

By degrees St. Teresa found the environment of the Incarnation increasingly irksome. There were various reasons for this, the chief being her desire to excel, to follow, in her own words, the way of greater perfection, a path incompatible with the worldliness of a society where there was frequent intercourse with secular people. Her own growing reputation led to her society being sought for in Avila. She had frequently to visit influential persons in the city at the orders of her superiors, and this Teresa, who never suffered fools gladly, regarded as a waste of time, for she wished to be something more than a consoler of commonplace women anxious to keep on good terms with both worlds. The semi-public life of the nuns also caused her own experiences to be bruited about, with the result that she found herself a storm centre, since she had enemies as well as friends and supporters, both within and without the convent walls. All this was irritating and wasteful. And, apart from her private inconveniences, the inefficiency and mediocrity around her galled Teresa's ambitious nature. As the higher perfection drew her on to greater intimacy

with God, it became clear to her that the ultimate reality lay neither in interior delights and raptures, nor in visions, nor in the spirit of prophecy, but in the conformity of the human will to the will of God. And God could not be served with the purest zeal in an ill-organized society which had no real unity of purpose. The Bridegroom would not consent to live in a slovenly and badly ordered house. He was the Master and should be treated as such. Those who dwelt with him must seclude themselves from the world, they must fast and pray and give themselves over entirely to the divine love.

Teresa has been criticized by a generation which makes statistics the criterion of the good life for the absence of any "social righteousness" in her philosophy, in other words for a selfish preoccupation with her own needs and the needs of those who immediately surrounded her. This criticism is far from being just. It is true that she had no interest in such a thing as the "standard of living", and she would have believed that anyone who declared poverty to be a disease, or a crime, was the mouthpiece of the Devil. Poverty was a good; wealth an evil. Yet though she hated the "little idol, money", she was willing to admit that those who built themselves great houses might have perfectly good reasons for so doing, although the rich could hardly escape leading a "wicked, artificial life", in which they had to eat at fixed hours and then have food "for their state rather than their liking", a life made up of external things and tyrannized over by domestics. Her attitude towards the rich was one of pity, and she claims that as the result of the graces that were given her in her mystic states, she became compassionate towards the poor, wishing to help them.

Their sufferings, however, were of small moment compared with the dangers which pressed upon the Church, and through that on the souls of her fellow men. She was actuated by her own ideal of service. But she thought in terms, not of bodies, but of souls, and

on her own premises—which are those of her time —she was ready for any sacrifice. One of the chief impulses to her foundation of the Reform came from her distress at the thought of the Lutherans whose souls were like " broken mirrors ", distress quickened by the vision of Hell which she had been granted. She saw the place the devils had made ready for her ; the entrance seemed a long, narrow pass, sending out foul, pestilential odours ; she was confined in a narrow space, " like a closet ", it was difficult to breathe and there was thick darkness. It horrified Teresa, though those Londoners whose memories go back to the days of the steam Underground trains will realize that the human organism can in time accustom itself to almost anything.

This vision, and another wherein she witnessed, without suffering herself, the punishment of the lost, filled her with pity for those whose souls were in danger, particularly for the Protestants who had once been members of the Church through baptism. She had an overwhelming desire to save them. To secure the salvation of a single one she would willingly have " endured many deaths ". When she reflected that the torments of the lost were endless, she felt that she must do something to rescue souls. The only possible way for a woman was through prayer, prayer which coming from a soul beloved of God would be heard in Heaven. And women could not find it possible to lead the life that led to perfection and the realization of their union with the Bridegroom in a place like the Incarnation. Something quite different was required ; a small society, carefully chosen, rigidly secluded, wholly devoted to prayer and mortification. There congenial temperaments might create the right sort of environment, where the world dropped away and the unseen became real. Preoccupied by no external cares, inflaming each other by their common zeal, leading austere, humble, cheerful lives, they would send forth a stream of prayer so grateful to God that the evil times, both

at home and abroad, would give place to better. Thus the will of God—social righteousness—would be served.

15

THERE was not, of course, anything particularly new or original in the idea of such a reform. Overwhelming evidence of the laxity in monastic houses in Spain, then the spear-head of Catholicism, can be found in Teresa's own writings. The choicer spirits had already revolted against it. Amongst these was one who had a great deal to do with the Teresan Reform, Peter of Alcantara, whose reputation for sanctity reached beyond Spain and ultimately gave him the aureole. This typical 16th-century mystic, whose raptures were the talk of the country, followed the original rule of St. Francis with additional austerities of his own. Three hours' sleep, and that in a sitting posture, was all he took; often he went for days without food, which he declared to be quite easy once the habit was acquired; he wore sackcloth next his skin and never spoke unless spoken to. When he was younger he had passed three years in a Franciscan house and not once raised his eyes, so that at the end of that time he only knew his brother friars by the sound of their voices. For many years he never looked upon a woman. To him as to Cicero, age in this matter was not unwelcome, and he admitted to Teresa that at last it had become one to him whether he laid eyes on them or not; his Spanish blood had then been tamed by time and his body was "so attenuated that it seemed formed of nothing so much as of the roots of trees". Thus St. Peter of Alcantara, both by example and precept, was the real progenitor of the reform of Carmel.

The project took shape gradually. A niece of Teresa, Maria de Ocampo, afterwards a distinguished member of the Reform, then living as a pensioner at the Incarnation, is said one day to have originally thrown out in conversation the suggestion of a convent

of " barefoot " nuns. It caught Teresa's imagination, and she broached the idea to a certain Doña Guiomar, a widow friend of hers in the town, who was in close touch with the Jesuits and Dominicans. These formed the religious intelligentzia of Avila and their backing ultimately made the scheme possible. Doña Guiomar was to provide the endowment, though it appeared later that her sanguine promises were out of proportion to her resources. For some time they talked the matter over, Teresa, the widow Guiomar, and the few sisters at the Incarnation who were relations or friends of Teresa. Nothing could come from such projects so long as they were kept secret amongst themselves. Clearly it was necessary to gain the support of persons in a position to help, but Doña Guiomar was frightened of the censure which the scheme would arouse if it got abroad. Teresa, more courageous, decided to move.

They agreed, therefore, to commit the matter with all earnestness to God. The answer was not long in coming. Teresa was commanded by that inner voice which Socrates called his *daimon* to labour with all her might for its realization. The convent should be dedicated to St. Joseph, who would keep guard at one door, and the Virgin at the other, Christ would be in the midst, and it was to be " a star shining in great splendour ". On this encouragement followed the command—and here came the vital point—that she was to tell her confessor about it, and to tell him moreover that he should not oppose nor thwart Teresa in this matter.

So far all was well. Courage, however, consists not in the absence of fear but in being able to overcome it, and Teresa found this none too easy. She hesitated. To go on would be to sacrifice the ease of her present life, which after all was pleasant enough, and to stir a hornets' nest round her ears. Could she, a simple nun, who had not even held any office in her own convent, carry through a reform of this kind? In the end courage, a saintly if not a theological virtue,

prevailed, and she told her confessor. The first step had been taken.

To be more definite she put it all in writing. It was now her confessor's turn to be frightened. Teresa was not the sort of person who, once she had made up her mind, would listen to arguments that ran counter to her decision. On the other hand, there were already too many monasteries without endowment to provide for their inmates; the poverty of the Incarnation itself was notorious. How then could it be a good thing to add to the number? Naturally Teresa was not ready to be convinced by a confessor who had been told, through her, that he was not to oppose her plan. He, on his side, compromised by advising that the matter should be referred to the Provincial of the Carmelites in Castile, to whose authority she was subject by her vows. Seeing that the Provincial, then a certain Father Gregorio Fernandez, would more likely be impressed by the suggestion if it came from a woman of position and reputed wealth than from a mere nun of the Order over which he ruled, of whose visions he had heard nothing, Teresa prevailed on the widow to approach him. This she did and he gave his consent.

It was arranged that there should be thirteen sisters. Doña Guiomar was hopeful about providing some endowment, and a house in Avila was fixed upon as the home of the new convent. Later in life, when she had gained more experience of affairs, Teresa would have mistrusted the apparent ease with which the thing went forward. Its success seemed still more sure when St. Peter of Alcantara wrote her a letter of encouragement and an even greater figure, Louis Bertrand, most renowned of contemporary Dominicans, whose learning and sanctity had made for him a European reputation, assured her from far-off Valence that in fifty years her Order would be amongst the most illustrious of the Church.

It might appear thus to men of vision; her project had a very different reception in Avila. There a storm

raged when it became known. Opposition against it was almost solid. The existing religious houses did not want to have still another rival to compete for the alms of the faithful, whilst those persons who believed that there were already too many monasteries in the town were opposed to adding another to this surfeit. Particularly bitter were the nuns of the Incarnation, who said that it was only restlessness on Sister Teresa's part, that she should be content to remain where she was, and that if she had found any benefactress wishing to give money to a religious house she should have prevailed on her to present it to the Incarnation. So strongly did public opinion run against Teresa in the convent that some proposed she should be put in " prison ", a tiny cell kept at the top of the building for those guilty of gross misconduct. All this fell on Teresa's head whilst the convent was humming like an angry hive, but consolation came from the voice which told her not to care what people said and reminded her of the persecution of the saints. Matters became more serious when the Provincial, appalled by the outburst, revoked his consent, and it looked as if the Reform, after all, would never come to pass. More than this, she was in actual danger of being denounced to the Inquisition. The story of her visions had been spread about, and now that her enemies were in the ascendant they might influence the Holy Office to proceed against her. To such warnings from her friends Teresa returned the answer of laughter ; her orthodoxy was impeccable, and she knew that she had done nothing without the permission of authority.

16

OBEDIENCE is the first virtue of the life spiritual, and the religious, who belongs to the soldiery of the Church, must cleave to it more firmly than a secular person. Teresa always insisted on this when she came to be a ruler herself. Yet above all stands the golden rule that there is no rule. Obedience and disobedience, truth and

error,—their frontiers are often shadowy and vague. The Provincial had issued his fiat that the convent was not to be ; the voice had told her that it was to be. And though the Provincial was supported by her confessor, who now boldly ordered her to think no more of the matter, Teresa had a faith in herself which transcended the discipline of the cloister.

Besides, there was no reason why that discipline should be infringed. If Teresa, being under obedience, could do nothing, Doña Guiomar was free to act as she pleased. So for the next few months, whilst Teresa's agent and the Dominican, Father Pedro Ibañez, were corresponding with the Head Quarters of the Church Militant in Rome, Teresa in the Incarnation enjoyed mystic experiences which now grew more frequent than ever. She said nothing about these, nor about the locutions which told her that she had pleased God greatly and that she should be silent until the time came to resume her activities—except to Father Pedro. To him she went through all the familiar symptoms of her spiritual state and whispered at the same time the encouraging things she had been told from above. He, on his side, declared her experiences to come from God and his confidence that her project would be realized. Six months had passed in this way when the Jesuits at Avila received a new rector, Father Gaspar de Salazar, a man of strong character and urged by the zeal which marked the Jesuits in the nonage of their Order. Very soon he was convinced that in Teresa the Church had a precious instrument. He was the more valuable a recruit, since, once he came over to her side, her Jesuit confessor and his subordinate was in no position to " oppose or thwart " her, and Teresa, with a pleasant wit, sent him a note saying that " God had ordered " her to tell him on the morrow to make his meditation on the verse of the psalm *Quam magnificata sunt opera tua*—" How glorious are Thy Works ". Her father confessor duly meditated and withdrew the ban.

Now that she had the support of the Jesuits, and

was guilty of no technical disobedience, Teresa herself set to work. But the utmost secrecy had to be observed lest the suspicions of the Provincial should be aroused. The first thing was to provide a house, and as the Doña Guiomar, who throughout seems to have been as inefficient as she was pious, at the critical moment found herself short of funds, Teresa employed some money she had obtained from her brother in Quito, which, with the " dower of two young ladies ", defrayed the purchase price. This difficulty overcome, the question then arose how to obtain the house without at once exciting the suspicions of the Provincial and the members of the Order of Carmel. The resourceful Teresa solved this by arranging that her sister Joanna, and her husband, who lived at Alba de Tormes, should give out that they were coming to live in Avila. Accordingly the house was purchased in their name, and to keep up the comedy they moved to Avila in the summer heat of 1561. Such was the compelling power of Teresa that her sister was even ready for her sake to endure the discomforts of having workmen in the house. The dangers, too. For during the alterations Doña Joanna's little boy of seven was struck by a piece of falling masonry and, as the story goes, killed. The mother, not without loud lamentations, sent for Teresa, who came accompanied by the faithful Guiomar, at whose house she was at that moment staying. The future saint, already in the eyes of her friends capable of working miracles, bade the mother and the rest of the household cease their crying, and taking the body in her lap and covering her face, she prayed for her nephew's life. Soon the child was able to thank his aunt for his recovery. In justice to Teresa it should be added that she herself makes no mention of this incident in her autobiography.

It shows that a good deal was expected from a saint in the Spain of the 16th century. Teresa, indeed, had to play many rôles. Architect, overseer, diplomatist, reformer—she was each by turns. Often it seemed to her impossible that the house she had

bought could ever be altered satisfactorily. It was too small, and only by taking the adjoining house for a church could the premises ever be suitable. But she had no more money. However, Christ, to whom she frequently complained that impossible things were being asked of her, a penniless nun, complained in his turn of the covetousness of mankind, and in consequence she gave up the idea. On the question of endowment she was helped by St. Clare, a saint who, though she never possessed the abilities of Teresa, shared her views about poverty. The Saint appeared to her in a vision and promised her help ; and when at her wits' end to know whether to go on with the alterations in spite of having no money to pay the workmen, St. Joseph advised her to take a business risk and trust to something turning up—as it did. Thus the mother house of the Discalced Carmelites slowly grew ready to receive its chosen flock.

The most serious difficulty of all was the attitude of the Provincial, and it required the utmost nicety of diplomacy to prevent him from getting wind of the matter. Had he learnt that the Jesuits were pulling strings at Rome in order to circumvent his decision, Teresa's reform would have been indefinitely shelved and her own personal situation, as a contumacious nun, been at least highly unpleasant. Avila was not a large place and though everything so far had been carried through with secrecy, feeling against her had not subsided and there were suspicions in the enemy's camp that something was afoot. Thus, a preacher in one of the parish churches when Teresa and her sister Joanna were amongst the congregation, denounced visions and revelations with such palpable directness that Joanna, the spectre of the Inquisition before her, was terrified and persuaded Teresa, then living with her, to return at once to the Incarnation. Teresa's nerves were unshaken, but she humoured her sister. More, for it grew clear to her and her Jesuit allies that until the matter had been definitely settled in Rome she and Doña Guiomar would do well to leave Avila.

No difficulty presented itself in the case of the widow, who was a free agent, and she accordingly went to stay with her mother at Toro. Teresa's position was different, and she could not leave except by the order of the Provincial. Father Gregorio Fernandez, however, was no match for those who had determined that his Order should be reformed whether he liked it or not, and by a pleasant stroke of diplomacy the Jesuits managed to persuade a certain great lady of Castile, Doña Louise de la Cerda, whose husband had just died, to request that Teresa should go and console her in Toledo. The Provincial, ready to oblige a lady of rank and wealth, gave permission, and accordingly in January, 1562, Sister Teresa, travelling "under obedience", repaired to this lady's house, where she rapidly won the affection and confidence of her hostess and raised the moral tone of the household.

After her departure came the next—one of the most important—steps in the affair. The Bishop of Avila, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, had to be won over. For this purpose the venerable Peter of Alcantara, now nearing his end and a sure candidate for the sainthood, wrote him a letter, praising the project for the foundation of a convent where the primitive rule of Carmel should be observed in its pristine perfection and asking the Bishop to help it forward. In itself the support of such a famous personage would have been of great weight. One may imagine that the Bishop felt even less disposed to refuse his aid since the new monastery was to be under the episcopal authority and not under that of the Carmelite Provincial. Besides helping a woman whom he profoundly admired, it presented the Bishop with the opportunity of making an annexation in what should have been the territory of Father Gregorio. Another factor which encouraged the Bishop was the knowledge that the General of the Jesuits, James Laynez, the worthy successor of St. Ignatius Loyola, was backing it in Rome.

There no hitch occurred in the diplomacy of the Teresan party and the brief was duly signed authorizing

Doña Guiomar and her mother to found a convent in Avila—Teresa being thus not compromised—under the diocesan, where the primitive rule of Carmel should be observed. Some anxiety had been caused in Avila because Joanna, tired of helping in a scheme which seemed to drag out interminably, had gone back to her own home in Alba, leaving her husband in occupation. Tongues began to wag at this separation of man and wife, but as his departure at such a moment might have made the whole thing public Don John fell ill for the good of the cause. The expected arrival of the Brief made it necessary for Teresa to return, and the same adroit diplomacy which had previously caused the Provincial to order her to Toledo released her from this particular obedience. Teresa had some difficulty in shaking free from the affectionate clutches of Doña Louise, who had completely succumbed to her fascination. But Teresa was in such a state of nervous excitement, due to the prospect of the approaching triumph of her cause, and aggravated by a rumour that she might be elected prioress of the Incarnation—an event which would have strangled the reform at its birth—that Doña Louise gave way. So she returned in great joy, and on the very night of her arrival, some time in July, 1562, the Brief came from Rome.

If success lay almost in her grasp, the need for the utmost secrecy only became the greater. The Provincial had but to hear of it, and she would be visited with punishment for her disobedience, a punishment entailing the ruin of all. Much had to be done. The house was not ready. Luckily the illness of her brother made this easier to supervise, for she obtained permission to nurse him and thus was able to superintend the final touches on the spot. Some persons nevertheless were suspicious, and she realized haste to be absolutely essential. Doña Guiomar, doubtful in her discretion, was not allowed to come to Avila and henceforth she drops out from the story of the convent which she had been authorized to found. At last all was ready and August 24 was fixed upon as the

date of the foundation. The day before, her brother-in-law declared that it was unnecessary he should be ill any longer: "Our Lord," says Teresa, for even saints sometimes indulge in irony, "restored him and he was astonished at it himself."

His departure left the house ready for the entrance of the nuns, and on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1562, the first Mass was said in St. Joseph's. Sister Teresa, now Mother and Prioress, gave the habit to four novices, and the Reform of Carmel was in being. Teresa thought she was in bliss as she contemplated the four poor nuns who were the first of her spiritual children, and reflected how, under her intimate guidance and behind the strict enclosure of primitive rule, they would follow together the path of the divine love. St. Joseph's would be a house entirely for the delight of the Bridegroom, their prayers would be heard in Heaven, the merits they accumulated would benefit many souls. And when everyone had gone away and she and the four were left alone, she was beside herself and lost in prayer.

Quickly the reaction came. Those who wish to do a work in the world must walk often by the light of expediency, a light which is apt to mislead. Had she acted throughout quite straightforwardly? Had she broken obedience in the spirit, if not in the letter? She had only been able to be present at the foundation because she had used deceit as to the real purpose of the house wherein she was staying! Had her methods been devious and secretive? Remorse led her even to question the wisdom of the reform. In a city of many convents she had created still another, and one which was not even under Carmelite jurisdiction. Would she be able to feed those others for whom she had made herself responsible? Would she herself be able to keep the strictness of the rule? Had not her motives all along been inspired by vanity and self-love? Such were the doubts that assailed the Foundress of the Discalced Carmelites during the days that followed. She faced them alone. For once she took

no one into her confidence, not even her confessor. Then this extraordinary woman, regaining her self-control, " laughing at Satan " from whom such doubts had come, decided to go boldly on and face the trouble that was in store for her at the Incarnation, where her obedience lay.

17

TERESA expected trouble. Apart from the indiscipline of a nun founding a convent against the wishes of her own superiors, her reform in itself was a criticism of the existing régime at the Incarnation. It did not greatly perturb her, however, for even if she were put in " prison "—a cell at the top of the house which is still shown to visitors—St. Joseph's was under the Bishop, and her superiors could not touch it. She was so worn out with seeing people that she felt the solitude would be grateful. Trusting therefore in God, in St. Joseph, and not least in herself, and bidding farewell to her little and tearful flock, she returned to the Incarnation.

There her cleverness and charm were once again triumphant. The Prioress, whatever her previous intentions, was quite unable to resist Teresa's account of her doings. As the story came from her lips, it seemed clearly to bear evidence of supernatural intervention, and the Prioress simply reported the matter to the Provincial. Before this well-meaning person, who had only recently assumed his office and was therefore not indisposed to criticize his predecessor's handling of the matter, Teresa changed her tactics. Refusing even to attempt to justify herself she kept a discreet silence, though when she thought of the " innocent " artifices which she had been using to hide her plans from him, she could not help laughing. The Provincial, captivated by her humility and gaiety, was no more inclined to be severe than the Prioress had been, and merely gave her a formal rebuke. Since this did not satisfy public opinion in the convent, he ordered that she should explain herself in his presence

before the assembled nuns. This she did " very much at her ease ", and when she had finished criticism was silent,—a silence which gives a measure of her greatness, for there is no surer test of leadership than the power to dominate a community wherein the familiarity of daily intercourse between equals provokes a candour antagonistic to the growth of hero-worship. Having silenced the wagging tongues of the jealous sisters, she spoke to the Provincial alone and succeeded in converting him into a partisan. Before she had finished with him she had obtained his promise that, as soon as the clamour had died down, she should be allowed to go and live at St. Joseph's.

The clamour, however, showed no signs of subsiding. It was not only in the Incarnation or amongst the Carmelites that opinion had been roused. Avila seethed with anger at the illegal establishment of another convent, and the City Council and the Chapter, making common cause in their dislike of the religious orders, decided that it should be dissolved. The town was in an uproar, and when the *corregidor* and his sergeants appeared at the door of St. Joseph's and threatened to break it down unless the four nuns came out, one may imagine the feelings of Teresa, who knew what was going on but had to remain behind the walls of the Incarnation. Yet she communicated something of her own spirit to the neophytes, and the young women refused to budge. Since St. Joseph's was a consecrated building, and violence against it might be considered as sacrilege which would recoil unpleasantly on the heads of lay officials guilty of a crime that the Inquisition would be only too ready to punish, the *corregidor* prudently stopped at threats.

Technically he was in the right, for Teresa had disregarded the law which made the assent of the civic authorities a necessary condition of the foundation of any mendicant religious house. But what counted the law against the zeal of Teresa and her friends ? Again she mobilized her forces, Jesuits and Dominicans, the

noble Don Francisco de Salcedo, and Father Gaspar Daza, who a few years before had jointly decided that her visions came from the Devil, Father Domingo Bañez, one of the most learned commentators of St. Thomas, who was then living in Avila, Don Gonzalo de Arando, a priest of good family who went to pull strings in Madrid, and others. The only hope of success lay in the capital. This time Teresa, thanks to the Provincial having laid no injunctions of obedience upon her, was able to direct the cause from her cell in the Incarnation. At one moment, indeed, the Prioress, who obviously was not born to rule, ordered her to meddle with the matter no more. But this only gave Teresa the opportunity of saying to God that, since the house had been founded for him, he should protect it.

At first the chances of success lay with the city fathers of Avila. It seemed as if St. Joseph's, after all, were doomed. But if the Law was the Law, the Dominicans were the Dominicans and they could whisper words into the royal ear of Philip II which might effectually prevent its cumbrous machinery from revolving. Philip II was prepared to listen the more intently since holy poverty had a particular appeal to the richest man in Christendom. Thus, in the face of the Law's delays and the growing strength of the Teresan party, the civic authorities grew weary. They declared they were ready to withdraw their opposition if Teresa would agree to the convent being endowed. Though she had been above the petty bitterness which marked the course of this civic strife she thought at first of agreeing out of consideration for those of her own party who had suffered most in the business. Her resolution, however, soon returned. She would have no truck with money ; unless Poverty were the corner stone of the edifice, it would have been built in vain. Christ made this clear to her, and the saintly Peter of Alcantara, now in Heaven, his body no longer attenuated but glorified, appeared with stern counsel to the same effect. Against such forces the opposition spent itself in vain. Teresa would not

budge, not even when some of her agents agreed to submit the matter to the judgment of "learned men", for the life-long admirer of men of learning saw through this "plot of Satan" and frustrated it; in such a matter she would trust no judgment but her own.

So at last, in March, 1563, this epic struggle came to an end with the complete victory of God and of intelligence. The Brief had arrived from Rome ordering the establishment of St. Joseph's in poverty, and the enemy, having exhausted their ammunition, had no alternative except to watch events take their course. The victor, with the Provincial's permission, moved to St. Joseph's. Five other sisters from the Incarnation had permission to go with her, three of whom were to find the rigour of the Reform too severe and later returned to the milder rule of the Mitigation. The only belongings that Teresa took with her were a scourge, a piece of straw matting and a hair shirt, for which with a saintly irony she left a receipt. On the way this woman of forty-eight, whose old and patched habit covered a delicate frame in which dwelt the most indomitable spirit in Spain, stopped at the Church of San Vicente. There, before the shrine of the Virgin, she removed her shoes, showing that henceforth she belonged to the Discalced Carmelites. There, too, she solemnly dropped her family name of Ahumada and emerged as Teresa of Jesus. After this act of symbolism she entered St. Joseph's, and going straight to the altar knelt before the Host in prayer. Immediately she was seized by an ecstasy, in which Christ placed a crown upon her head and thanked her for what she had done for his mother.

What she had done for the Virgin. Teresa, besides being a proud Spaniard, was also a Carmelite, and the Carmelites have always regarded the Virgin with special veneration. Her interest was such that she had been present at its foundation in the small cloud no larger than a man's hand, which Elijah summoned on that famous occasion, and she was believed to have remained a nebulous presence over Mount Carmel until the advent

of Christ, nine centuries later. Naturally the Carmelites, in an age when competition between the orders was keen, made much of their patroness, whose cult in their turn they had done a great deal to foster. The Virgin had not been ungrateful. More than once she gave signal help to the Order dedicated to her and whose motto was the single word "Maria". It is more than probable, indeed, that in now thanking Teresa she had not only St. Joseph's in mind; already taking shape in Teresa's brain was the idea of something more than a single convent of the Reform. A new Carmel—that was the vision which had so often in the past held the imagination of the nobler Carmelites. These strove but in vain against the laxity of the Middle Ages; the Carmelite monasteries they founded had slipped back into the easy-going ways of a time which, in its respect for privileges, was ready to allow the Devil his due. A more strenuous day had now dawned, America had been discovered, Luther had thrown an ink-pot at His Satanic Majesty—an unpleasant, restless age, which it made Teresa angry to think about. "The world", she used to say, "was in a fever." It would perish of its restlessness were it not for the religious orders, yet these were so blind that they would not accept the lesson that England and north Germany and the Huguenots had taught them. They would not set their house in order. Assuredly, in founding St. Joseph's Teresa was looking beyond Avila. Now, as public opinion in the town changed from hostility to wonder at the spirit which reigned in the new convent, and as its reputation spread to Madrid and Rome, prophecies began to be remembered; how St. Pachomius, the cœnobite, had foretold the decay and restoration of the Order, how St. Hildegarde had seen strange brown and white horses (the colours of the Reformed Carmelites) going from west to east, which even more clearly indicated belief in the reform that was to originate in Spain. Many other tales went from mouth to mouth, adroitly shaped by the intelligent to appeal to the mind of the people.

In the meantime Teresa showed how false were her fears that neither she nor the sisters would be able to endure the austerities of the life she had planned. All was very different from the Incarnation—the difference that separates the professional from the amateur. The enclosure kept them from the world, now in so sorry a state that even to learn its code of polite manners " required a lifetime ". Few visitors troubled the repose of St. Joseph's. There was no coming and going, no worldly, epigrammatic, quizzing talk in the parlour. Nuns could only appear unveiled before their nearest relations, and even then they had to converse through the grating and in the presence of a third person. Conversations even with mother and father, brother and sister, were avoided as far as possible and must always be short. Within the grating " through which it should be impossible for anyone to put his hand ", none might enter except the confessor and the doctor ; these must be admitted by the Prioress in person, who kept the keys, and must be attended in their progress by two sisters. Stringent penalties, with a maximum of nine days in " prison " and disciplining in the refectory, were laid down for those who infringed these rules, for the nuns of the Reform had to understand that they were on active service, that they were doing no less a work for the Faith than those whose sex allowed them to go out and battle in a world riddled by heresy, a world which they were to help to save by prayer and sheer strength of will.

Everything was designed to deflect the impulses into a single channel by the forces of obedience and enthusiasm. Those instincts which we regard as natural were ruthlessly suppressed. The most rigid form of communism ordained that any nun, showing a partiality for her cell, or even her breviary, should be at once deprived of it. Even the trifling decorations which the poorest like to set up in their homes were forbidden, so that only in the church could they give rein to the instinctive desire to beautify their sur-

roundings. Their cells were innocent of curtains, carpets, or cushions, they slept on straw mattresses laid on planks, their pillows were of serge. Of serge, too, was the habit. They wore their hair short, and their feet were shod with the sandals still used by the Spanish peasantry. " For decency " they were allowed stockings of hempen cloth. When not in choir, or during the recreation hour which followed dinner and supper, silence was enforced and they had to remain always in their cells except so far as they were called from them by the unavoidable work of the convent. Their business was prayer, prayer made stronger through mortification, and at least seven hours a day were passed thus and in reciting the offices. They began at six in the morning with Tierce ; they had not finished with the endless round until eleven at night when Matins and Lauds were over and they could retire for their short night's sleep. Apart from their religious exercises they were allowed to feed their minds on a few holy books in the vernacular, books that helped to maintain the spiritual emotions centred on the love they bore for the spiritual Bridegroom.

The focussing of energy produced an exaltation of which the fame spread over Spain. Instead of finding the life hard, exhausting, monotonous, those able to withstand its immense austerity drew from it a passionate excitement. The self-surrender of its asceticism gave them a superhuman strength and courage. They never touched meat and for six months in every year they fasted. Since they lived on alms it might always happen that when the time came for the daily dinner in refectory at eleven there was nothing to eat. Such an event, far from causing discontent or despair, merely put a finer edge on their devotion. Once, the story goes, on the feast of Corpus Christi there was only a loaf of dry bread to divide, but Teresa, as they broke this amongst them, spoke of the Bread of Life with such burning zeal that with one accord they went in procession to the Choir where they gave thanks for their holy Poverty and sang hymns in praise of the true

Food, the Body of Christ. The courage possessed by Teresa, in such a degree that she gave the impression of being " a bearded man ", she communicated to all, so that she was astonished at their progress in saintliness.

Sometimes she found it necessary to check their ardour. The austerities she practised on herself were not permitted to others who had to conform to a standardized régime. Provision was made in the Constitutions for regular chapters of faults, when they could accuse themselves and one another ; some Mondays and Wednesdays, and all Fridays, were set apart for regular disciplines for which, when taken in choir, birches were to be used as the ritual prescribed. Teresa's dislike of " pious exaggeration " prevented her from making her subjects go barefoot ; the same distrust induced her to forbid penances in excess, or without leave. She was always on the side of moderation. Prioresses, she knew, were apt to grow harsh through authority ; the Visitor Friars often lacked common sense. " Our rule ", she writes on one occasion, " cannot bear austere men ; it is austere enough as it is." On another we find her forbidding the sisters to pinch one another. Women easily fell into silly ways if not checked, and Mother Teresa would have dealt sternly with the mortifications that were unctuously related of Sister Mary Christina, the gifted daughter of Coventry Patmore, who used to eat the morsels on the dirty plates in the scullery.

Excessive piety was dangerous. Teresa herself might have raptures and revelations, about which she was never tired of consulting the learned. Such experiences were against her will, they were beyond her power to check. In the case of others they should be rigorously dealt with, for though some might be authentic, it was quite certain that many were false. If the least encouragement were given the " greater part of women would be led away by these imaginations and as they had neither the prudence nor the knowledge of men to be able to form a proper judgment of

things, they exposed themselves to a greater danger". Even true revelations should be discouraged, and realizing the perils that beset the mystic's path, Teresa grew finally to deprecate the sisters from making too close a perusal of her own "Life". They might thereby be led to forget that virtue consisted, not in favours from God, but in conduct here below.

Not only in the complex excitement that religion generates did the sisters of the Reform find compensation for a life that discouraged family affection, that forbade personal friendships within the cloister—the nuns were not allowed to enter each other's cells nor to embrace, nor even to touch each other's hands—and that eschewed the barest comfort. The gracious personality of the prioress was always able to direct emotion into channels less charged with passion. Her gaiety and high spirits had not been damped by age. Twice a day in the hour of recreation, when the sisters could talk of anything they pleased, the wit and poetry of her conversation charmed these women, who were nearly all well-born and to whose inherited culture Teresa had been careful to see that they added a native intelligence. Chaff and pleasantry then tightened the bonds that held the society together. They could talk of anything—except earthly love. That was taboo. "We must never mention such a love, sisters," says Teresa, "nor remember that it exists, nor must we even hear it named, either in jest or earnest, nor suffer it to be discussed in our presence. It is utterly worthless." The dullards who wished to talk shop received short shrift. "O God, how I love thee," a young woman exclaimed during this hour one day, and the trouble that resulted caused the officers of the Inquisition to visit the premises on the plea that Teresa had forbidden the nuns to love God. All were in a dither except Teresa, who laughed at the officiousness of those dreaded gentry. It is well to know that the young woman had by that time been cast out from the Order. Another who, being asked to sing by Teresa and sourly refusing on pious grounds, was despatched to her cell

and duly punished, for Mother Teresa had no patience with long faces. The pipe, tabor and cymbals used at the Convent in her day are still shown to visitors at St. Joseph's.

So with jest, song, and no doubt with dance, which in Spain is still an occasional handmaid of religion, the nuns recreated themselves, in order to become worthier brides of Christ. His humanity fed their waking thoughts, and doubtless held their dreams. At Christmas he entered the monastery as the *Bambino* and the nuns, mothers for the moment, dressed and tended the divine Child. The profession of a novice allowed them to celebrate the mystic marriage with song, often improvised by Teresa herself. Passion-tide, the climax of their year, coming at the end of a tremendous six months' fast, filled them with an exaltation only different in degree from that which drives the Hindoo widow to suttee.

18

Teresa spent the next five years perfecting the instrument she had devised, the only period of her life in which that ardent, restless spirit submitted to the rigour of the enclosure. In many ways they were years of happiness. At last she could exercise to the full the powers of domination she had shown since early childhood. Even her ironical pleasantries were received with unquestioning obedience, so that when she ordered a sister (that Maria de Ocampo who is said to have originated the idea of the Reformed Carmelites) to plant a rotten cucumber in the ground, her only question was whether it should be laid horizontally or perpendicularly. Such simplicity of heart was admirable, but it laid itself open to abuse later on, and led to awkward or absurd results. Prioresses were facetious, or forgetful. One sent a sister to walk in the garden and thought no more of it, so that she would have gone on walking all night if her absence had not been discovered. "What will happen," said another, as she

stood by a pond in the Convent garden, "if I tell Sister So-and-so to throw herself in?" and for answer there came a splash. "Look, how beautiful it is," said a sister to her superior, holding up a large, fat worm. "Then go and eat it," answered the jesting Mother, whereupon the sister went to the kitchen and began to fry it, to the horror of the sister-cook, who prevented her from carrying her simplicity further. To stop such incidents Teresa caused learned men to explain to the nuns wherein true obedience lay. Thus did these women, who had entered the convent in simpleness of heart, learn that even in the cloister nothing is simple.

When Teresa compared her own youth with theirs, paroxysms of humility swept through that imperious soul. She was a "very wicked woman"; they were growing into great saints. Such self-abasement, coupled with the joy she felt in the perfection around her, was accompanied by mystic favours in ever greater measure. Her daughters on their side adored her as a mother and reverenced her as a Saint. The idiosyncrasies of the chief are always a favourite subject of conversation amongst subordinates, and one can imagine how these women, in mild defiance of the rules of silence, whispered to one another of Teresa's raptures and converse with God. Not even the strictness of the enclosure prevented the report of her favours spreading abroad. "Thou art Mine and I am thine," the Voice now said to her continually. At Pentecost a dove, "with wings of small shells shining brightly," hovered over her head. The extraordinary graces she enjoyed were the talk of the town.

"She saw with the eyes of her soul that which her soul desired." It comforted her that the Dominicans and Jesuits stood also high in grace. In a vision she beheld Father Pedro Ibañez, her Dominican supporter, rewarded by the Virgin with a white cape which she laid on his shoulders in consideration of the services he had rendered in the foundation of St. Joseph's. The Jesuit Fathers, also, appeared to her in the

honours lists of Heaven, carrying white banners in their hands. Thus her friends were rewarded. Sometimes she was premonished about them. To the impetuous Father Gaspar de Salazar, the Jesuit Rector at Avila who had helped her so much and whose quarrels with her other friend and supporter, the noble Bishop Mendoza of Avila, she deplored, she was bidden by Christ to foretell persecution and distress. In due course he was removed, but owing to her warning she tells us that he felt the blow much less than he would otherwise have done. She had visions, too, of the ultimate fate of those whom she knew. Gregorio Fernandez died. He was the Provincial who had shilly-shallied about the Reform, and Teresa was anxious about his salvation because he had been in authority for twenty years and " the cure of souls was full of danger ". But after about a fortnight of earnest prayer she saw him ascend to Heaven in great glory, his very old body rejuvenated to the prime of thirty years. By another vision she learnt that a Carmelite friar, thanks to the Bulls of 1226 and 1245, had entered Heaven without even this brief period of purgation. In a third she perceived that a very recently deceased Jesuit was accompanied in his ascent by Christ " by way of special grace ". These visions of the dead were not all pleasant. At the funeral of a " certain person " who had led a very wicked life and died without confession, she observed a multitude of devils waiting in the open grave. It was so painful that " it required no slight courage " on her part not to betray her distress. She could not prevent these stories, which are related in her autobiography, and doubtless many others now buried in oblivion, from going the rounds of Avila. If they edified her friends they can hardly have pleased her enemies.

Her fame was to be still further enhanced by her " Life ", which she began writing soon after she had definitely installed herself at St. Joseph's. Her confessor had asked for it and she had no choice but to obey, though she assured him that all her spare time

was given to the distaff. This brilliant book took her two years to write and proved to be the first of a series of works which have given her a place amongst the doctors of the Church. No doctor was ever less dry-asdust. Her vitality survives translation, a supreme test, and though she wrote " with much toil and labour ", the impression of her style is that of easy conversation, even when she is unravelling the skein of her psychological experiences. Because humour is not a saintly characteristic we are perhaps inclined to overrate the traces of it in her writings. Yet she saw the comedy, as well as the tragic worthlessness, of the world. " Religion says hush-hush to all smart wit," a modern philosopher has observed. Teresa would have agreed with a twinkle in her eye. " My style is so heavy that even against my will I fear I shall be tedious to others and to myself. . . ." Was ever an author's modesty more slyly expressed? Sometimes she smiles, as when she points out to her brother that in return for his presents of sweets and money she sends him a hair-shirt; or she rebukes a lax correspondent with pleasant irony: " Be careful the Devil does not tempt you not to write "; or she expresses the ludicrous fear, known to all letter-writers, that she has put her letters in their wrong envelopes. And sometimes the lip curls and the humour is almost brutal. " I have just heard that the Moors of Seville ", she writes to her Prioress in that place, " are conspiring together to get possession of the city. What a glorious opportunity you will all have of becoming martyrs."

Her " Book of the Foundations " is full of touches that show her to be a kindred spirit to Cervantes. Of one of her journeys she writes how their carriage had to go by deep precipices where it " almost swung in the air ". " If we took persons to show us the road, they led us as far as it was safe and left us just before we came to a difficulty, saying they had something to do elsewhere." Even so did the good Sancho Panza, kinsman to such as these, show a tender regard for his

skin. The hardships of those journeys, performed on mule-back, or in springless carriages over roads " rougher than those of the soul ", included " bearing with the tempers of many people ". Yet Teresa's ability to see the humorous side of things helped her and her attendant nuns in spite of frayed nerves. One day of great heat the sun beat down on their carriage so fiercely that when they got in it seemed like Purgatory, but they " travelled in great cheerfulness and joy by thinking of Hell ". Wit flashes out in all sorts of unexpected places. The Andalusians had souls like everyone else, souls that had to be saved. At the same time they belonged to the South, she to the North, and she describes Seville as the " place where men say the devils have more power to tempt us ". " Your letter was too short for so long a journey," she writes to one of her friends, a noble of the house of Braganza. We can still hear her feminine laughter when she tells the story of the well-meaning Father Antonio, who when making arrangements under her supervision for the first Carmelite monastery of the Reform for men, told her with pride of the furniture he had collected, which consisted only of five hour glasses " so that the offices could be said regularly ".

The personal quality that runs through all her writings, though it may emphasize that religion is the most monumental chapter in the history of human egoism, gives them a place of their own in the classics of Catholicism. She writes about herself, but with such charm and sincerity that even the long list of the graces she received from the Bridegroom only rarely conveys a suggestion of complacency. She had not, however, fully mastered her medium in the " Life " which, as an autobiographical document, ranks with the " Pilgrim's Progress ", but lacks the directness of Bunyan's masterpiece. Not so " The Interior Castle ", her last book and the most beautiful expression of Spanish mysticism of the 16th century. In this glowing vision of one who had advanced so far above the

mystic path that the two planes of the actual and the ideal had lost the antinomy which they usually possess even for the most saintly, the various stages of supernatural experience are set out in the simplest language, and similes from running water, the flight of pigeons, bees, flowers, the sparks that are thrown off by burning logs, disguise the rather mechanical conception of the Kingdom of Heaven as a feudal castle, in the seventh mansion of which the soul draws near to God to receive the mystic " kiss of the mouth ". In the epilogue to this allegorical prose-poem, an epilogue and also a farewell to her sisters of the Reform, she strikes a note of pity which flows from the deepest springs of the human spirit : " Considering your strict enclosure, the little recreation you have, my sisters, and how many conveniences are wanting in some of your convents, I think it may console you to enjoy yourselves in the interior castle where you can enter and walk about at your will, at any hour you please, without asking leave of your superiors." She wrote this at the end of her career, when she had come to rule entirely by love.

In these five years at St. Joseph's, whilst she was engaged in making her first foundation into a nucleus of the Reform, she devoted herself, after she had completed her autobiography, to writing what was at once a text-book and an impassioned eulogy of the religious life. " The Way of Perfection " has the distinction of being the first feminist book in the history of the world. It is the work of a woman determined to assert the right of her sex to do and to endure. Her daughters, Teresa writes, must seem " not to be women in anything, but valiant and brave men ". Courage, and again courage, is as much the essential of the heroic nun, soldier of the heavenly King, as it is of those who fight the battles of the kings of the earth. They must allow no small feminine weaknesses, no petty jealousies, no trivial ailments to come between them and the great virtues. To acquire these must be their constant aim, an aim they can achieve only by faithful observance of the Rule. They must be strong in

discipline, hard with themselves. Yet as spirituality perfects common sense they must indulge in no " frenzy of mortification ". She is sterner towards her nuns than Napoleon towards his *grognards*, for she will have no grumbling in her convents, though she fears the habit may be too deep-rooted to be eradicated. " Oh, this constant complaining amongst nuns," she exclaims on one occasion, with a touch of despair.

Cloistered women were strange creatures, reverent and timid, liable to infatuation for their confessors (for which the Visitors must be ready to " chastise with severity ") and infected with the restlessness of the age. Later on, we find her warning tender-hearted superiors against indulging " the caprices of women ". Even for reasons of health it was unwise to yield. Because nuns wanted to move to another convent they convinced themselves that the monastery they were in was injurious to their health, and though their conviction might be well founded, it was unwise to give way, for it was almost " better that some nuns should die than that all should be injured ". Not only were they to be like men in their courage and determination. Even in their speech Teresa deprecated their using expressions such as " My life ", " My soul ", " My love ", that were " only fit for women ". They were also to avoid those niceties of language, those turns of phrase, the slang which every generation coins for itself. The Reform attracted many well-born and intelligent young women and Teresa was determined to prevent the conversational smartness that had reigned in the parlours of the Incarnation from becoming fashionable in her convents. It distracted them from their one and only function of winning the favour of the Bridegroom.

Yet the way of perfection did not lie alone " in suavity of prayer, in ecstasies, raptures, visions ". Humility and the abasement of the soul were the real test. The convents of the Reform must contain Marthas as well as Marys. All could not be contemplatives ; nevertheless prayer was the first duty of

the Carmelite, and through prayer all—Marys and Marthas alike—might attain that peace and joy which the world could not give.

The world, indeed! Again and again the pride of the woman who has turned away from it to follow an ideal and yet has never quite forgotten its glamour crops up in Teresa's pages. They had given up much, their life was hard; it was at least freed from the indignities that women with husbands to humour had to suffer. Their bridegroom was Perfection, always the same, always present. "You can find God whenever you have a mind to; He holds the mere fact of our turning towards Him in such high esteem that on His side He meets us half-way. In like manner, as they say, it is the wife's duty who wishes to live happily with her husband, to be sad if he is sad, and if cheerful (although it may be that he never is) cheerful. See, sisters, from what a servitude you have been delivered." Only a Spaniard and a woman could express such a magnificent pride.

That judicious combination of firmness and sympathy which marks the great leader is everywhere apparent in "The Way of Perfection." Like her other books it betrays a mind, sensitive and observant rather than speculative. Her mysticism drove her to almost incredible activity, but it was the activity of the administrator and the stateswoman, not the thinker. She had very little interest in dogmatic theology. Once or twice her speculations on the nature of God led her to the verge of the vague pantheism which is the mystic's ultimate home, but on the whole she steered her way between this and quietism, another goal of mysticism, without bringing down on herself any unwelcome attentions from the Inquisition. There is a tiny speck upon her orthodoxy in that on one occasion she writes of the Trinity in a way not easily reconcilable with the Thomist view of that mystery, which, indeed, was no mystery to her since one day, whilst reciting the Athanasian Creed, the One God and Three Persons were revealed to her with so much clearness that she was

" greatly astonished and consoled at the same time ". A loyal daughter of Holy Church, she writes in her Preface to " The Interior Castle " : " That it will be the fault of ignorance, not malice, if I say anything contrary to the doctrine of Holy Roman Catholic Church, may be held as certain. By God's goodness I am, and always shall be, faithful to the Church, as I have been in the past."

She ran the greatest risk of falling into the clutches of the Inquisition by her " Conceptions of the Love of God ", which in its comments on " The Song of Songs " might easily have been accounted dangerous. " Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth, for thy breasts are better than wine " is the text of this passionate work that was written with the intention of enabling her daughters to understand and enjoy the words of The Song of Solomon, a poem, by the way, to which the Hebraic genius should forbid us from attaching any symbolical interpretation. When her confessor heard what she had done, without even looking at it he ordered her to throw it in the fire. He knew the dangers of commenting on holy writ in the vernacular.

Under obedience Teresa committed the pages to the flames, the gesture costing her less since she had another copy. A similar order had been given her once before by Domingo Bañez with respect to the " Life ". On that occasion she had asked him to think again, and his second thoughts had not borne out his first. As for the Inquisition—she knew how to manage even that dreaded organization. About the time that she wrote the " Conceptions ", she had been in person to call on the Inquisitor, had explained to him her fears that she might be doing something that was not absolutely safe, and the Inquisitor had reassured her that she had nothing to be afraid of. No one was better aware than she that things can only be done in this world by getting the right people on your side.

She never lost sight of this cardinal axiom of worldly wisdom, and during the five years that she prayed, ruled and wrote behind the grille of St. Joseph's she

did not cease to keep in touch with those who were in a position to help in spreading the Reform of Carmel beyond the narrow limits of Avila. One thing troubled her. Before the foundation of St. Joseph's she had made a vow always to do that which was the most perfect. But *le mieux est l'ennemi du bien,* and her scruples were roused. She consulted her confessors, who observed that no saint had ever before been known to make such a vow and agreed that it was a case where authority should be invoked to release her. The Provincial offered no difficulty and her confessor was given permission to allow her to substitute for her previous vow a promise to submit the question of what was the more perfect course to the discretion of her spiritual director. Since confessors in the end were usually brought round to the same way of thinking as this unusual penitent, the result perhaps was not much different. But it helped to clear the board. For the Prioress of the modest St. Joseph's had become a personage. Both in Madrid and Rome powerful influences were at work in support of her plans. Francis Borgia, her old acquaintance, was now General of the Jesuits and had the ear of the Vatican. Philip II was all eagerness to see the decrees of the Council of Trent concerning the reform of monastic houses applied to Spain, where abuses were rampant. At the King's request the Pope, Pius V, one of the outstanding figures of the Counter-Reformation, sent Giovanni Rossi, the General of the Carmelite Order, to make a visitation of Spain, during which he went to Avila.

Teresa's biographer, the Jesuit Ribeıa, hints that a miraculous intervention turned his steps in that direction, at a time when Teresa had formulated her plans for the spread of her Reform, and he says that she would gladly have dispensed with his visit since there was the possibility that the General might have been angry with her for having placed St. Joseph's under the Bishop's jurisdiction, and might even have ordered her back to the Incarnation. Teresa's courage, however, was equalled by her foresight. She

and her party were sure enough of their ground, her only difficulty lay in reconciling the conflicting ambitions, or the *amour-propre*, of the General and the Bishop. Bishop Mendoza had always been her friend and staunch supporter. But the feelings of her friends could not weigh in the balance against the cause. It was no good trusting in bishops; the Reformed Carmelites must be under the authority of their own Order. So when she received the General as if St. Joseph's were subject to him, when she told him the history of her life and her hopes for the future, the Italian was charmed and expressed anger only against the stupidity of the Provincial which had allowed so holy a woman to transfer her allegiance to the diocesan. Most gladly he received her back, and so long as he remained in Avila he repaired as often as he could to enjoy the delights of Mother Teresa's conversation, and before he left he had given her authority to found convents within the Kingdom of Castile. Only two further conditions were imposed, she must place such foundations under the jurisdiction of the Order—no more bishops should be allowed to interfere with its domestic concerns—and she should not go into Andalusia, for the Andalusians had already shown themselves to be troublesome customers and he did not want another hornets' nest about his ears.

On one point he hesitated. Teresa, looking beyond her own sex, wished her Reform to embrace that of the Carmelite friars, but the astute Italian feared the consequences of allowing this dominating woman to intervene in a question that in any case was full of danger, and she failed to extract the permission she so anxiously desired. Teresa, however, had powerful friends, and she took steps to bring pressure to bear, with the result that, on the eve of his return to Italy, he sent her the required authority. It reached Teresa when she had already begun to extend the Reform by founding a convent at Medina del Campo, during the labours of which she was "always thinking of the monasteries of friars". The General proved to be

justified in his misgivings, for a few years later the Discalced and the Calced, the Carmelites of the Reform and those of the Mitigation, came to open war, and nearly brought Teresa's work to ruin.

19

In the last fifteen years of her life Teresa shows us the example of the saintly character in its highest development. The phenomena of grace, a grace extraordinary, eminent, rare, were apparent in every action during that time when she struggled with prejudice in high quarters and hostility, or worse still with apathy everywhere. In the words of a contemporary, she was great from her feet to her head, and above her head she was still greater. Nothing shook her courage —that strength of soul which is beyond mere personal motives and ambition ; her serenity was proof against any of those shocks to self-esteem, any ingratitude, any insult which embitter less finely endowed natures. It was a fifteen years' battle with her own ill-health and with the " opposition of good people "—so serious a trial to Christian love which insists on appreciating the motives of opponents and enemies, which insists on giving everyone, except the Devil, his due. Teresa's command of the first of the theological virtues caused another contemporary to remark of her that the best way to secure the Saint's favour and goodwill was to do her an injury. For all that, she was a dangerous woman to oppose. Many times she was thwarted, but never without sooner or later proving that humility was not inconsistent with having her own way.

Not that Christian humility should be confused with humbleness. Teresa was ready to suffer any ill-treatment when it only touched herself. There is the story of how, whilst praying in one of the Toledan churches, a woman who suspected her of having stolen one of her wooden shoes went up to her and belaboured her over the head with the other. Teresa submitted without protest, only remarking when rejoining her

companions: "God bless the woman! I had already enough headache without that." But let such ill-treatment touch the cause of the Reform, and she talked to the greatest as her equals. During that same period at Toledo the administrator of the diocese was slow in granting permission for the foundation of the convent on which she was engaged. She went therefore to the Archbishop's representative—His Grace himself had fallen into the clutches of the Inquisition—and talked to him "with a certain firmness". "Sir," she said, "Sir, it is more than two months that I have been in Toledo, not to see this city nor to enjoy myself, but to seek the glory of God and the good of souls, and to render to his Divine Majesty in this famous town the services which I have been able to do for Him in certain others, which is the founding of monasteries where the primitive rule of Carmel is followed. It would have been worthy of your learning, your virtue, and the authority with which you have been invested, to help poor women in so holy an enterprise, since God has put you in a position where you can so do. That however is not what I have observed of you hitherto. . . ." She went on in the same strain until the administrator gave way without more ado, and the monastery was duly founded, in a poverty, one may add, more complete than any of its sister convents. The furniture consisted of two straw mattresses with one blanket (the nights in Toledo are still cold in March) and the first day they had not even a "withered leaf with which to fry a sardine". They had been staying, before moving in, at the house of a wealthy woman who, although she had a great affection for Teresa, never thought of helping them once they had left her. Teresa commenting on the lack of imagination on the part of the rich, explains it as being due in this case to the will of God that the sisters should appreciate the blessing of poverty.

The story of those years during which she was travelling up and down Castile founding monasteries in one town after another is contained in her "Book

of the Foundations ", which resembles " The Bible in Spain " both in being the account of its author's effort to evangelize the people of that country and also in the entertainment of its narrative. It reads sometimes like a picaresque novel, sometimes, in its emphasis on the marvellous, like a tale from the " Thousand and One Nights ", sometimes in its plain matter-of-fact style like the " Commentaries " of Caesar. Adventures crowded upon Teresa as soon as she had left Avila to found a new convent at Medina del Campo. Four nuns accompanied her, two from St. Joseph's and two that she had taken from the Incarnation. She had chosen this town of Old Castile because the Jesuits there were her friends, and they had been able to prepare public opinion. A novice for whom there was no room at St. Joseph's had provided money for the journey. It was little enough in any case, but Teresa was always ready, like all who succeed in the world's affairs, to take financial risks. On the way she received news from Medina that the Augustinians there were raising objections against the foundation of another monastery, and it looked as if the journey might prove to be in vain. The affair was more serious since Teresa's credit was bound up with the success of her mission, which she had undertaken in the face of much opposition at Avila, particularly from the relations of the two nuns from the Incarnation who were now with her. To return at this stage would have dealt a crushing blow at the prestige of the Reform. So she concealed her anxieties and decided to push on. God had promised his help, and it was a favourite maxim of hers that he helps those who help themselves.

With the instinct of a born commander she decided to repeat her tactics at the foundation of St. Joseph's and to surprise her opponents. She and her companions arrived at Medina on the eve of the holiday of the Assumption (August 15) and as they hurried through the streets, accompanied by some Carmelite friars from the local monastery, they narrowly missed

meeting the bulls that were being driven in to " run " next day. When they reached the house which had been taken for them it looked ruinous, even in the dark. The walls were crumbling and the stars could be seen through the roof. But they set to work at once, the nuns to sweep and the friars to put up the few hangings they had brought. As nails had been forgotten they groped about and extracted the rusty ones from the old beams. Directly day broke the bell was rung and Mass said, the sisters keeping their enclosure whilst following the service by peeping through a chink in the door, and Teresa felt happy that there was one more Church where the Sacrament was reserved. It was a small compensation for the many that had been desecrated by the Lutherans. But she was happy only for the moment ; for the house was in so ruinous a state that they were practically living in the street. Men had to be hired to guard the Host at night and Teresa, fearful lest they should sleep at their post, would frequently rouse herself and peep through the window in the moonlight to make sure that they were on the alert.

Besides being practically houseless, their money had also come to an end. There seemed, indeed, no possible escape from an ignominious return to Avila when, after a week, a merchant of the town offered to lend them a floor of his house whilst their premises were put in repair. At the same time a rich widow gave them money for repairing the house, so that two months later the miracle was actually accomplished and Medina del Campo, in despite of itself, had been provided with a Convent of the Reformed Carmelites.

It is a piquant coincidence of letters that places " The Book of the Foundations " beside " The Bible in Spain ", the record of the frail, indefatigable champion of Catholicism beside that of the stalwart colporteur of Holy Scripture. St. Peter's net never drew up a pair whose identity of purpose was marked by a wider divergence of method. Teresa would have nothing to do with so dangerous a book as the Bible, and would

not trust it in the hands of her daughters. There was a pious young woman, who was about to be received in one of the convents of the Reform. The day before, when making the final arrangements with Teresa, she remarked that she would bring her Bible with her on the morrow. "Bible, child?" Teresa said with surprise: "No, you shall not come here with your Bible, for we are ignorant women who do nothing but spin and obey." And history, bearing out the holy mother's prescience, records how the young woman's curiosity ultimately led her into the jaws of the Inquisition.

The seven or eight generations which separated George Borrow from Teresa of Avila had not modified the views of the ecclesiastical authorities on this point, though at least one bishop was a client of Borrow's. Yet the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society hardly met with more opposition from high quarters than did Teresa; on the whole the future Patron Saint of Spain found greater hostility amongst all classes of her countrymen than the English heretic. If bishops frowned upon the New Testament in the vernacular, many were firmly opposed to the foundation of still more monasteries. Not only in the archiepiscopal palace of Toledo did Teresa have to battle with prelatical antagonism. Even at the very end of her life, when the Reform had won the prestige that follows a triumphant emergence from persecution, it still persisted. There was, for example, the Archbishop of Granada who "threw out sparks" when he heard of the proposal to found a convent in his cathedral city. He declared that he would like to abolish all convents, and, amongst "other unpleasant remarks", pointed out the monstrous folly of bringing more nuns to a place where after years of famine the people themselves found nothing to eat. But Teresa could bring heavy artillery to bear upon the recalcitrant and the angry prelate, according to the Carmelite annals, was sobered by a thunderbolt which fell on his palace whilst he was in bed and visited the wrath of Heaven upon some of the archiepiscopal mules.

"The opposition of good people" met Teresa on all sides. Not only did bishops object to additions being made to what they thought was already a superfluity of monastic houses. Other convents objected to increasing the calls on the alms of the faithful who were hard put to it to provide for so many mouths—mouths that to pray must be fed. Would-be novices, too, had often to encounter enormous difficulties from their families, difficulties in which they were sure of Teresa's support. She who, when hardly more than a girl, had persuaded her young brother to become a Dominican, and in this last period of her life had taken into the cloister her niece, the daughter of her pious brother Lorenzo, at an age when to us the kindergarten would seem a more suitable place, could hardly be expected to sympathize with the reluctance of relations at such sacrifices of youth and beauty.

The most remarkable story of this kind is that of a certain Doña Casilda who belonged to a wealthy family of Valladolid. Casilda was the youngest of three children. Her elder brother and sister had both in turn renounced the honours of their house, the brother to become a Jesuit, the sister to enter a convent. The hopes of the family therefore centred in Doña Casilda, whose uncle, to bring these hopes to fruition, had obtained a papal dispensation to marry his niece. No sooner had the girl, at this time ten or eleven years of age, been affianced than she fell into a profound sorrow. She came to despise the things of the world more and more, and Teresa relates that even saying the Rosary ceased to be a pleasure. From this to the realization that she could only ensure her salvation by joining the Reformed Carmelites was but a step. Accordingly when one day in the convent with her mother she refused to leave. Her mother's entreaties were in vain and only the promises of her confessor—that Domingo Bañez, one of Teresa's staunchest supporters who had been summoned by the Prioress—that she should be allowed to return later induced her to go home. Doña Casilda, frightened that her

intended husband would come to hear of her resolve, decided to outwit her attendants and re-enter the convent by a ruse. Accordingly she managed, when out driving with her governess, to call there under the pretext of leaving some faggots for the sisters, and when the door was opened she rushed inside and threw her arms round the statue of the Virgin. The Prioress and sisters refused to give up so holy a child, and though the servants threatened to batter down the door it was to no purpose. Casilda declined to budge. To the entreaties of her family, to the prayers of her bridegroom, she was equally deaf. When her uncle tried to persuade her that she could serve God as his wife by giving alms, she returned the curt reply that he should give them himself. "She was", says Teresa, "on the whole disgusted with him."

But the family was powerful and not inclined to see their plans thus go astray. They obtained an order from the King that the convent should give her up and she was forcibly removed amidst many tears. In spite of the pressure now brought to bear upon her—and flogging was one method of curbing the spirit of disobedience in the daughters of noble houses—her resolution not to wed the earthly bridegroom chosen for her remained unshaken. She waited until she had reached the age of twelve, when by the canon law she ceased to be a minor, and then in a church one day, whilst her mother was in the confessional, she told her governess to go and ask one of the priests to say a Mass for her. As soon as the woman had gone off on this errand she took off her clogs, and tucking them in her long sleeves ran as fast as her legs could carry her to the Carmelite Convent. The governess followed her with shouts, but Doña Casilda, young and active, reached the monastery door first and managed to enter before her pursuers could overtake her. She was at once given the habit by the Prioress. It is interesting to note as a sequel to this not altogether pleasant anecdote of Spanish high life in the 16th century, which cost Teresa a special journey to Valladolid, that the

Jesuits and the Carmelites, both orders in which the individual members are sworn to poverty, engaged in litigation over the family property.

20

TERESA, looking out on the world through which she was now constantly travelling, opined that it was ruined by greed. Yet even the state of holy poverty could only rest on a foundation of money. If the saintly Bishop Palafox, whom Teresa admired without reserve, did not go so far as the Victorian Buckle in asserting that, after the love of knowledge, no one passion had done so much good to mankind as the love of money, he could assert that it was a powerful master without whose help hardly anything great or holy could be done. "I do not remember", says Teresa, "ever to have refused anyone through not bringing a dowry, if in other respects I found them suitable subjects." At the same time the houses necessary to form her "nests of perfection" had to be bought, and for that they must have money. So we find references in her letters to the dowries which the young women of rank and fashion brought with them to the new Carmel, and references also to the lawsuits which these not infrequently entailed. "She has given the habit to a young lady", Teresa writes of the Prioress of Veas, "who has brought with her a dowry of 7,000 ducats. She is soon to receive two others who have as great a fortune as the former. A lady of rank, niece to the Count de Tendilla, has also taken the habit. She has given a great quantity of plate, candle-sticks, table service, reliquaries, crosses and many other valuable things which it would take too long to mention. But a law-suit is now going on . . ." To another correspondent she writes: "Some have entered our houses at Medina who brought 800 ducats, and another at Avila who had 9,000."

These wealthy novices alone made the work possible. In spite of them, money was often hard to come by,

and the calls upon her increased in number and urgency as the Reform spread. Her brother Lorenzo, who had returned from the Indies after amassing a fortune, came to her assistance now and then, as he had done at the foundation of the first St. Joseph's at Avila. Once, indeed, at Segovia he made himself security for so large a sum that he had to take sanctuary in the Carmelite Monastery of that city to avoid being thrown into prison. Teresa was constantly in difficulties. But with the *flair* of one who knows that Providence favours the brave, she never played for safety. "All things obstruct us while prudence rules our actions", she declared apophthegmatically in "The Interior Castle"; and she justified her own maxim by her success. Yet success had to be paid for. The claims of business became ever more pressing, and though she knew that the less attention she gave to external things the more she progressed in her inner life, she was forced to go on ceaselessly working, often till two and three in the morning, keeping up with the mass of her correspondence, encouraging, rebuking, transmitting to others something of her own courage and enthusiasm.

21

In the midst of this work of establishing convents and monasteries agreeable in the sight of God, her fortitude as a leader was to be put to a severe test. The good old times, when men, and specially women, regarded the cloister as an agreeable compromise between two worlds were coming to an end. The Council of Trent had passed decrees about enclosure which the zealous Pius V and the no less zealous Philip II meant to enforce. In 1571, when Teresa had made eight foundations of nuns and three of friars, a certain Pedro Fernandez came from Rome with powers to visit the Carmelite monasteries. He was a Dominican, and therefore friendly to Teresa whom he decided to appoint to the vacant office of Prioress of the Incar-

nation at Avila. The condition of that convent was deplorable. The 150 nuns came and went as they pleased; those who remained had often nothing to eat, so abject was the poverty and mismanagement into which the house had fallen. Desperate measures require heroic remedies and it is possible that Teresa's enemies were not averse to seeing her put in a position where she would, they thought, infallibly burn her fingers. To the Dominican, anxious for moral and financial efficiency, Teresa's sanctity and business acumen made her the ideal candidate. If Teresa took any serious trouble to avoid the responsibility, she does not say so. She felt certain hesitation on the score of the future of her own convents, but these were overcome by a divine locution which told her to accept the office. The probability is, therefore, that she desired it.

When the nuns heard that their right to elect a prioress had been overridden in order to place Teresa in authority over them, they prepared for resistance, and calling on the support of their male friends in Avila, they made ready to do battle against the woman whom they looked upon as a traitor, who had conspired in secret against her own house, had left it to work for her own ends and now returned to complete its destruction. Before starting for her new post Teresa solemnly renounced for herself the mitigated rule that prevailed at the Incarnation. Having made this sign of affection for her own Carmel of St. Joseph's, she repaired to the Incarnation accompanied by the Provincial, Father Gaspar de Salazar, and another friar. No sooner had they entered the choir and the warrant of her appointment been read than the church was in an uproar. Shouts and curses were hurled at her and more material missiles were thrown at her person. Some of the nuns who had decided to accept the appointment began chanting the Te Deum. The others only screamed the louder. Amidst these frenzied, fainting women, the Provincial could only behave like a helpless male and by his anger increase that of the

excitable females round him. Teresa alone had command of the situation. Realizing that to share the passion of the mob was to descend to its level, she remained kneeling before the altar, apparently quite uninfluenced by the unedifying hubbub. When it had subsided through the physical exhaustion of the parties, she rose and expressed the sympathy she felt with those who objected to her appointment, and prayed the Provincial not to be astonished at their perfectly reasonable antipathy to herself. Who could be angry after that ? More, for anger turned to wonder as she attended to those who had fallen in the fray, bringing them to their senses in a manner afterwards regarded as miraculous, though she attributed her success to the fact that she bore on her person a relic of the true Cross.

For the moment the tumult was stayed. But the anti-Teresan party did not mean to leave her so easily master of the field, and prepared to transfer the conflict to the first meeting of the sisters in Chapter, being as rude as possible to their Prioress in the meantime. Again Teresa was too clever for her opponents. They found it hard to be impolite when she gave way to no provocation and maintained an invariable gentleness. And when they were summoned to Chapter and filed into the choir, ready to assert the rights of their rule to do what they pleased, they found in the Prioress's stall, not Teresa, but a statue of the Virgin. Their Prioress was sitting humbly at its feet. When she followed this gesture by a speech, veiling determination under the cloak of humility, which Teresa knew so well how to assume, the victory was hers. " The Virgin really performed wonders," observed Teresa in recounting this incident. It was not long before the sisters of their own free will gave her up the keys of the parlours and of the convent hatches, and begged her to name those who were to fill the subsidiary offices. " Since so it appears to your reverences, let it be so," she replied, and from that time she could rule in the way that she preferred—by love. Sometimes it was

necessary to instil fear, as in the case of the young man who did not realize that things at the Incarnation were not as they had been and continued his daily visits to the convent. When he was unsuccessful in seeing the sister of his choice, he boldly demanded an explanation from the Prioress in person. He got it, accompanied by the assurance that, if ever he troubled the Incarnation again, she would complain to the King and he could then think of saving his head.

But this "undaunted daughter of desire" found her health giving way under the double strain of fighting the poverty of the Incarnation and keeping in touch with the convents of the Reform. She suffered from almost chronic fever and headache. "My native place agrees with me in such a way that it does not seem I was born here," she writes to her sister Joanna. When she thought how utterly out of proportion were the tasks laid upon her to her bodily strength she would laugh to herself, so absurd did it seem. And when she discovered, as all leaders do, how weak were the human wills of those on whom she had to rely and how precarious the organization she had founded, despair would fall upon her, despair and a great desolation, until she remembered that merit lay not in fruition, not in the success of achievement, but in doing, in suffering and, above all, in loving.

In loving—that was always the secret. "It was not necessary to think much, but to love much"—and every year she lived the greater and more perfect grew her love. The press of business, her constant travels, never preoccupied her to the extent of allowing her to forget for a moment the heavenly bridegroom. At Salamanca, in the summer preceding her return to the Incarnation, the mystic impulses had been specially violent, the ecstasies, accompanied by numbness and stiffness of the members, more painful than usual. Once she had been unable to swallow the Host, and when she had emerged a little from the trance into which she had fallen it seemed as if her mouth were filled with blood and as if its warmth covered her

whole body. These high points of emotion were counter-balanced by periods of depression in which her loneliness seemed intolerable. Then Christ would console her, explaining that as men sought for companions with whom they could speak of their sensual gratification, so it was natural for the soul to seek for those to whom it might communicate its pleasures and pains.

Now at the Incarnation she had a congenial spirit in St. John of the Cross. The most remarkable of her spiritual children and the only one whose courage was not inferior to her own, John of the Cross had been brought by Teresa to help in re-establishing a spiritual atmosphere in the Incarnation. The year that he spent there as chaplain, living in a cell at the end of the convent garden, was to mark the culmination of Teresa's spiritual life, when her love was crowned by the mystic marriage. Very dear to her was the companionship of this poet and mystic, her " little Seneca " as she called him, a man of whose conversation at the parlour grille, she said, one had to beware, so easily did it lead to raptures and transports. Under the influence of this intimacy the graces of Heaven were multiplied upon her. God spoke to her continually, as a rule about herself, but sometimes giving her messages for others. When she asked the Lord why he should cause her this trouble, instead of communicating directly with the persons concerned, the answer was : " Theologians will do nothing to enter into personal communication with Me. Repulsed by them I must choose women to open My heart to and speak of My affairs." It was a signal honour when intimation came to her that she had been elected, in the absence of the Magdalen, to the place that saint had enjoyed upon earth in the affections of the Lord. And finally, upon the octave of Martinmas, she was made aware that Christ had taken her for his bride. At the Communion that morning John of the Cross divided the Host between her and another sister, which she thought he had done to mortify her since he knew her predilection for large hosts. But Christ

said to her: "Have no fear, My daughter, for no one will be able to separate Me from thee." Then appearing in an "imaginary vision" he held out his right hand and said: "Behold this nail! It is the pledge of thy being My bride from this day forth. Until now thou hast not merited it; from henceforth thou shalt regard My honour, not only as One who is thy creator, king and God, but as thine own, My veritable bride. My honour is thine and thine is Mine."

So she relates the event that marks the climax of her mystic life. From that time she understood how between the divine betrothal and the spiritual marriage there was the same difference as between a betrothed and a married couple in the world. She realized that Christ, bound to her by an indissoluble tie, wished to be separated no more from her, and that her whole life flowed from God. No love, in a word, could surpass that love.

22

THE graces of Heaven, the anxiety of affairs, ill-health, advancing years—all these left the gaiety of that witty woman unimpaired, and in the hours of recreation at the Incarnation, whilst Teresa reigned as Prioress, the sisters could laugh and be merry under the inspiration of her genial irony. The reply that she drew up to the challenge of the monks of Pastrana, that monastery of the Reform which was to become famous throughout Spain, for a contest in holiness must have caused the laughter of more than one such hour to come near exceeding the discretion the sisters were ordered by the Rule to maintain in their merriment. The challenger was that Father Gratian upon whom she was to lavish the passionate and poignant devotion of her declining years. Her answer, couched in the mock-heroic terms borrowed from the books of knight-errantry, begins by their excusing themselves from entering the spiritual lists on the score of feminine weakness. Still the nuns will do what little they can; each sister will

offer up some merit in exchange for the virtues they will gain from the prayers of the knights of Pastrana :

> " Sister Anne of Burgos says that if any knight will pray the Lord to grant her humility, and the prayer is answered, she will give him all the merits she may hereafter earn.
>
> " Sister Beatrice Juarez says that she will give to any knight who will pray the Lord to give her grace to hold her tongue till she has considered what she has to say, two years of the merits which she has gained in nursing the sick.
>
> " Isabel of the Cross will give two years merits to any knight who will induce the Lord to take away her self-will.
>
> " Teresa de Jesus says that she will give to any of the Virgin's knights who shall every day offer up a most determined resolve to bear all his life with a stupid, vicious, gluttonous and ill-conditioned superior, the day he shall form such a resolution, the half of what she has merited that day in the communion as also in the many sufferings she endures, which all told will be little enough."

The best satire of Cervantes, says Froude, is not more dainty. Could the sisters help loving such a superior who turned the sharpest edge of her delicate wit against herself ? And can we help loving such a saint who hints so neatly at a not complete indifference to the pleasures of the table ? Generals of the Jesuits have been gourmets, but in a Christian mystic such a common human weakness is rare. True, Teresa more than once laments the fact that it is necessary to eat and drink, an explicable enough complaint in one whose digestion was chronically disordered. On the other hand we know that she found it irksome to abstain from meat, and her culinary skill caused the sisters at St. Joseph's to appreciate the refectory meals when she was acting as cook. There was a Martha in her, as well as a Mary. She had at least one rapture in

the kitchen when, frying-pan in hand, she was seen to rise off the kitchen floor. It may be her example that led Reculet to dedicate his work on practical gastronomy to the Virgin, who being without spot or stain was the best patroness of a science *à laquelle la décence convient si bien*. In any case Teresa showed in this, as in other departments of life, a sturdy independence backed by a wit that was always ready to expound her point of view. The story is told how, when staying at a nobleman's house in Manzanares, a place famous for its partridges, Teresa at dinner observed one of the servants showing disapproval at the gusto with which she was enjoying the delicacy, and rebuked the domestic with pleasant humour: "Mira, su caridad, y apprenda: cuando perdiz, perdiz! y cuando penitencia, penitencia!"—"There is a time for partridges and there is a time for penitence."

A time for penitence. The enemies of Teresa hoped that the time for her penitence was now approaching, when at last she had reduced the Incarnation to order and her ascendency in Castile never seemed so assured.

23

Her enemies found plenty of occasion to criticize. If greatness excites passionate loyalties, it also begets violent antipathies. It was easy to point out that Teresa was a restless woman, a woman avid of notoriety who, in spite of her advocacy of the strictest enclosure and the most complete withdrawal from the world, was never long in one place and who made known the graces she had received from God, which even if genuine should have remained hidden within the modest obscurity of the convent. Her friends, under the domination of that many-sided personality, realized the synthesis which underlay its apparent contradictions. Her enemies saw the contradictions and, not hearing that voice, not seeing that smile, explained them as hypocrisy. She professed to love the cloister and to be possessed with the "great joy of living alone";

the conventual life was to her as a river and she could only breathe freely in the " torrents of the bridegroom's love ". Enemies compared these professions with the facts as they saw them—how, of the three years she was Prioress of the Incarnation she had spent hardly half this period within the walls of the convent. She had gone to the Incarnation in October, 1571; in February, 1573, she went to Alba; thence to Salamanca; early in the following year she was at Salamanca, having called at Avila and Medina on the way; further travels brought her back to Avila only five days before her triennium as Prioress expired on October 6, 1574—" a restless gadabout woman ".

Refusing to be re-elected Prioress, as the sisters of the Incarnation now wished, she started, after a few weeks at her own St. Joseph's, for Valladolid, where the troubles of the Doña Casilda who has already been mentioned required her attention. And from Valladolid she went to Veas, and at Veas she at last gave a handle to her enemies which they were not slow to use. For by her original patent from Rossi, the General of the Carmelite Order, she had been forbidden to found any convent of the Reform in Andalusia, and Veas was geographically in that province of turbulent spirits which takes its name from the Vandals.

The astute Italian who still ruled over the Order had expressly confined Teresa's activities to Castile. He had also only unwillingly consented to the extension of her Reform to the friars, without which her ideal of winning over the whole Carmelite Order to the primitive observance would have been in vain. Teresa experienced at the Incarnation something of the hostility her policy roused amongst the conservative party, but being strong and masterful herself whilst most women, in her own words, were " timid and reverent " she managed to overcome it. But men had more determination and Teresa must have been aware that the friars of the mitigated rule would sooner or later attempt to wreck the movement she had initiated, not least the " criminal friars " of Andalusia whose

only desire was to continue to lead their old lawless lives such as we read of in the pages of Rabelais. But Teresa would never have subscribed to the motto of Safety First. She meant to go on, whatever the Devil and wicked men might do, and she never showed a bolder spirit than in the vast intrigue of which she now became the centre.

Her enemies, however, aimed ostensibly not at her but at Gratian, that holy knight of Pastrana to whose challenge Teresa had sent the mock-chivalric reply. The two met at Veas for the first time, and Teresa, always partial to men of superior presence, at once fell under the fascination of his enthusiasm and of a charm which was accompanied by great personal beauty. Gratian, then a young man of thirty, had already made his mark. The son of one of Philip II's secretaries, his gifts attracted the attention of the Apostolic Visitor of the Carmelites for Andalusia, who had secretly invested Gratian with the powers which he held from the Pope. In virtue of this Gratian founded a Carmelite monastery of the Reform in Seville the year before his meeting with Teresa. This had embittered the feelings between the two sections of the Order, and the General, Rossi, not unnaturally annoyed that his wishes as to Andalusia had been flouted, obtained from the Vatican letters cancelling Gratian's appointment. Though these, also, with that secrecy which hangs like a miasma round the whole history of the Teresan movement, had not been divulged, they were known in Spain and within two months of their issue the Papal Nuncio, in September, 1574, had confirmed Gratian in his appointment as Visitor of Andalusia. Gratian was on his way to Madrid to try and straighten out this tangle when he met Teresa at Veas.

All the good accounts she had heard of the young man, whose boldness appealed to her, were confirmed by his spiritual zeal and handsome presence, and an intimacy at once sprang up between the woman of sixty and this man of half her age which is one of

the most romantic episodes in the gaunt history of monasticism. He spoke to her of the experiences of his soul, how when a boy at Madrid he had been used to see a statue of the Virgin, to which he prayed, shed tears at the wickedness of mankind, how he had entered the Carmelite Order by the direction of Providence, not intending to do so at all. He told her things of which he had never spoken even to his confessors, and he gave her a manuscript to read in which some of them were recounted. He was a man entirely after her own heart and Teresa, who had sacrificed her life to the pursuit of the ideal love with such burning ardour and with such extraordinary rewards, now lavished on Gratian the affection for which her womanly instinct craved. She loved him and no mother was ever blinder to the faults of a wayward son than was Teresa to Gratian's deficiencies of sense and temper. For her Gratian was " perfect in everything ".

She realized almost at once that the relationship between them was different to that which had existed with any of her other confessors and priestly friends, different even to her friendship with John of the Cross. The impression was confirmed by a vision she had one day at table. She saw Father Gratian at the right hand of Christ, who taking his hand placed it in hers, bidding her at the same time accept Gratian in His place for life. It passed away " with the swiftness of a meteor ". But Teresa was sure it had not been sent by the Devil. Pondering upon it, she decided to take a vow of obedience to him—to regard Gratian " as in the place of God, outwardly and inwardly ". When, not without some pain she had thus resolved, she felt happy and free. They parted, she at the instigation of Gratian to make a further infraction of the General's order by founding a Carmelite convent in the capital of Andalusia, and he to Madrid. Contemporaneously with these events the Carmelite Order were holding a general Chapter at Piacenza in which steps were being taken to bring Teresa's work to ruin. For this purpose a certain Jerome Tostado, a fanatical

Portuguese and the General's chief lieutenant, was sent to Spain armed with full powers to carry out the policy which had been decided on by the Chapter.

Teresa, though she knew nothing of the happenings at Piacenza, thought that some explanation was due to the General of the Order for what she and Gratian had done, and she therefore wrote to explain that when she went to Veas she had not realized it was in Andalusia—what man ever credits a woman with any topographical sense?—and she had only made the discovery a month after the foundation of the convent. As to the Seville foundation—well, she had been impelled to go there because of the unhappy divisions between the Carmelite friars, and once there it was natural to found a convent. She ended what was for her rather a lame letter by commending Gratian, a man "like an angel", to the General's favour. Looking back on her conduct afterwards from the vantage point of time, she remarks that never at any other place was she so weak and cowardly. Her troubles were many, and she came as near to expressing her contempt and dislike of the Sevillians as a saint might. Even the heavenly husband treated, or seemed to treat, her with something of that casualness which appertains to the earthly reflection of the spiritual marriage. The convent had been temporarily established in a hired house. Faced with the difficulty of finding suitable quarters she prayed incessantly to God that he might provide his brides with proper accommodation, and the answer finally came: "I have heard you: let Me be."

That reply, if it meant anything, surely meant that they would be suited, and when an old and ruinous house was forced upon them Teresa could not believe that this carried out the obligation. Could God fail in his word? She refused to admit it, although nothing remained but to sign the deeds. And sure enough at the last moment, as so often happens in the sale of real estate, the negotiations broke down. God did even more, for the house they were then able

to buy had a garden from which could be seen the ships sailing on the Guadalquivir, a prospect that filled Teresa, always sensitive to pleasant sights and sounds, with much devotion to the Lord. They took possession by night with the secrecy in which so many Carmelite convents of the Reform were born, Teresa, her Prioress and the two nuns, going there through the dark, narrow streets, and all, except Teresa, thinking every shadow a hostile friar. Friends helped them to furnish the monastery in something approaching luxury. Amidst the austere poverty which characterized the Teresan movement, the fountain of orange flower water in the Seville convent stands out in gracious contrast. And Seville was to maintain its reputation for southern fickleness, when, in contrast with the previous opposition, the Host was brought with extraordinary pomp to the convent by the Archbishop himself, who walked in a procession representative of the religious and civic life of the city. The veiled figures of Teresa and the sisters followed the sacrament, and the religious excitement of the Sevillians reached its height when, as Teresa knelt publicly before the Archbishop to demand his blessing, the great prelate in reply dropped also to his knees and asked that the Saint should confer her blessing upon him.

Seville had paid a splendid tribute to a woman who was already a national figure. In the ensuing struggle, that touched larger issues than the reform of a monastic order or the quelling of lax and turbulent monks, Teresa, owing the double allegiance which so often makes it difficult for the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church to fulfil the conflicting claims of religious and civil obedience, may not have realized that her cause was synonymous with that of Spain. But those who look on see more of the game than the players, and we cannot help remarking the paradox that this most faithful daughter of the Church was unconsciously voicing by her policy the still inarticulate national sentiments of Spain against the supernational claims of the Papacy. Teresa, destined afterwards to become the Patroness

of her country, was the real protagonist during the four years' battle of the Spanish party, led by Philip II and the Archbishop of Toledo against that of Italian interference in Spanish concerns. In the early stages of the conflict Ormaneto, the old Nuncio, who had been favourable to Teresa and Gratian, died ; his successor, a north Italian named Sega, was as determined as the Portuguese Tostado to crush the centrifugal forces set up amongst the Spanish Carmelites, which if they were allowed to continue might have the most far-reaching consequences to that obedience universally due to Rome.

From Seville Teresa watched the clouds gathering. In the justice of her cause she was assured, but this did not prevent her from going through periods of anguish when she considered the dangers her work ran of being undone. Nor could she always bear with the calumnies uttered against herself, though she was comforted when, as often happened, God appeared to her in visions. But these faded and her fears again divided her soul " in a sharp warfare ". She was particularly troubled about Gratian, though the voice told her that he would not die. His health, far from good, had not been improved by repeated falls from his mule. And he ran real danger in Seville, whither he had returned from Madrid at the behest of Philip II against the advice of his brother, who was in the royal secretariat. No sooner had he shown himself at the Carmelite monastery there than he had been mobbed by the monks. In fear of poison and the stilleto he ate only boiled eggs—for the same reason a favourite dish of the Osmanli Sultans—and wore a shirt of mail. Teresa, fearless for herself, trembled for Gratian. " Life ", she wrote, " is to live in such a way as not to be afraid of death or of anything that may happen while it lasts." The Stoic, the Christian, the Moslem may meet on the high levels of conduct whither the observance of such maxims leads. But Mohamed could weep over his friend who had just been taken to Paradise, and Teresa feel

the utmost alarm for the safety of her loved Gratian. Soon she was served with an order enjoining her to make no more foundations and to choose a convent from which she should not stir. It was, as she remarked, " something like sending me to prison ". Yet it affected her spirits not one jot. On the contrary, the prospect of suffering was actually pleasing. " Not only did this not distress me, but it gave me such unexpected joy that I could not control it, and I felt no surprise at what King David did before the ark." Thus she describes her feelings. What chance had the craftiest schemes of men against such indomitable pluck?

Besides, her enemies held no monopoly of influence, astuteness, or knowledge of the world. Teresa had long learnt the lesson that those who want to do things must know the right people. Now, when she received this order, she was in the midst of making arrangements for the foundation of a convent at Caravaca. Not wishing to see these come to nothing she appealed to her friend and supporter, Philip II, and received from him a royal permission to proceed with the work. Though she had to depute others to establish the convent, her gesture was none the less an answer to the decrees of Piacenza and the enemies of the Reform. Neither did she hurry to leave Seville, where the winter climate suited her health. Gratian still claimed authority over the Province and he gave her leave to remain until the spring. It was not till June that she left for the convent at Toledo which she had chosen as the place of her retreat. There she arrived in July, but before settling down she went to Avila, eighty miles distant, in order to fetch Sister Anne of Saint Bartholomew, the best beloved of her daughters, to act as her companion and secretary.

Never was Teresa truer to herself than in the dark months, extending over two and three years, which seemed to the world to bring the fortunes of her cause near the point of extinction. Not only her work, but her own good name was in question. The air was thick with calumny; her personal character was

blackened by her priestly enemies; "the last thing to be said of any woman was said of her". One of the sisters in Seville, acting almost certainly in complicity with the old Carmelites, had left the convent and brought such charges against the modesty, the flagellations, the public confessions, the mystic orgies of the nuns, that if her accusations could have been substantiated Teresa and the other sisters might well have suffered the fate of the sect of the Alumbrados, whom the Inquisition had burnt by scores. From these charges she was exculpated, but not before the friars of the Old Carmel had thought of sending her to India.

24

SURE in her sainthood, she could always find consolation and encouragement in converse with the heavenly Bridegroom. But she had also to lead the other life set on the normal plane of everyday things. Her health was wretched. "Rushing waterfalls in her head" continually tormented her; the chronic sickness grew worse, and to add to her troubles she fell and broke her arm. Yet if her mind was "like a bird with broken wings", she had the perfect self-confidence of genius. "Now let the true fire come," she would exclaim, and she was ready to meet the gravest anxiety with a smile, maybe with a jest, and always with a cool head. Never has saintliness been more fairly justified in its children than by Teresa in the darkest moments of her career, when she had to summon not only the courage to endure, but also the intelligence to outwit her enemies. And beyond all this, she had the detachment to write "The Interior Castle", a book which breathes the purest spirit of religious and poetic serenity. Begun in Toledo it was finished in Avila whither she had gone in July, 1577, to place St. Joseph's formally under the jurisdiction of the Order.

More than anything else she suffered for the violence to which her devoted friends and colleagues, John

of the Cross and Gratian, were subjected at the hands of their brother Carmelites. Both had been seized and thrown into monastic prisons, where John of the Cross especially was treated with gross barbarity, being flogged daily by all the monks in the Toledan monastery where he was confined. On behalf of Gratian Teresa appealed to the King in person, protesting in a letter against the monstrous charges trumped up against the leaders of the Reform. The greatest monarch in Christendom had always supported Teresa and was now only patiently awaiting an opportunity to intervene. He had been anxious to meet the Carmelite nun on her visit to Madrid ten years before, when she countered the idle curiosity of the great ladies of the court by talking, not of her mystic experiences, but of the architectural beauties of the capital. Always slow to move, Philip on that occasion sent for her only after she had left Madrid. Now, if the tradition at the Escurial is to be believed, she journeyed thither secretly and was received by his Most Catholic Majesty. What passed at the interview is hidden in the obscurity behind which Philip liked to work. The fragment of a letter in which Teresa recounts their meeting, states that after she had pleaded her cause the King's expression changed, his eyes grew kinder and more determined and he assured her that everything should be done as she desired. Teresa knelt to thank him, but he bade her rise and graciously bowed to the saint before him. A loyal Spaniard, Teresa showed to Caesar the honour that was Caesar's and kissed the royal hand. Though the authority of this letter has been impugned, partly on the ground that Teresa would not have knelt before a layman nor kissed even a king's hand, the gestures are in keeping with the perfectly sensible attitude Teresa adopted towards worldly distinctions. For herself she despised them, and would not allow them within her convents. But when in Rome . . . That she realized the truth of the adage is shown by her telling one of her prioresses

to be careful to insert on the address of her letters the correct titles of a post-master who was acting as intermediary for their correspondence. Spanish punctilio could hardly go further.

Philip was as good as his word, though the tortuous way in which he acted was of a piece with his character. He let the Nuncio and Tostado continue their violent campaign, and let the Pope know at the same time that it did not have the royal approval. When he had given the pair enough rope, he allowed one of the nobles round the court, Count Tendilla, who belonged to the illustrious family of Mendoza and was a kinsman of Teresa's life-long friend the Bishop of Avila, to go to the Nuncio and plead the cause of the friars of the Reform. The Nuncio was obdurate, and then, as one may believe, according to plan, the Castilian pointedly insulted the Italian representative of the Pope. From Philip the irate Nuncio got cold comfort, and when the Count, in answer to the royal request, wrote a letter explaining his conduct, the King professed himself satisfied. In the meantime the Count, assuredly with Philip's approval, had persuaded the Attorney-General to use the civil courts in defence of the friars, with the result that a royal decree was issued suspending the order of the Nuncio until the friars of the Reform had had a hearing. Only one more step was needed to end the persecution—that those before whom the case was to be heard should be favourable to the cause. When therefore the Count again called on the Nuncio, and again discussed the same subject which had previously led to high words between them, the Nuncio said that he would agree to have any persons whom the King might appoint to assist him in trying the case. The Count asked him to put his words in writing, and with them in his pocket went to the King, who at once appointed for this purpose four clerics, three from his personal entourage and another who was notoriously favourable to the Reform, Father Pedro Fernandez. " When I saw that the King had named him, I looked on the matter

as settled, as, by the goodness of God it is. Though the noblemen of the realm and the bishops who took great pains to put the truth before the Nuncio were many in number, yet it would have all been to little purpose if God had not made use of the King."

As usual Teresa was right. The persecution neared its end. In April the Nuncio and four clerics appointed by the King met and the representative of the Pope gave way after a resistance sufficient to save his dignity, appointing as visitor of the reformed Carmelites Father Gaspar de Salazar that Carmelite of the Old Observance who had long been a personal friend of Teresa. Yet though the cause appeared to be going well, Teresa did not relax her efforts. It is in the last phase of a battle that the victory is really won and she was determined to secure its fruits. So whilst the Nuncio was climbing down as gracefully as possible in Madrid, two monks of the Reform, in disguise and secrecy, were on their way from Avila to Rome with instructions to press for the complete severance of the two sections of the Order. And in July, the Nuncio himself brought forward the same proposal, which was confirmed in due course by a Papal Brief.

The victory had been won after twenty years of conflict, years in which Teresa had had to suffer every kind of detraction and calumny from her adversaries. " C'est le trait des grandes âmes," says Renan, " d'être incapables de haïr." In the moment of triumph Teresa put the past resolutely behind her and looked only to the future. Within her own party there had been divisions and jealousies, disagreements between leaders, weaknesses, irresolution, faintness of heart. Remembering these Teresa laid down the four rules which the men of her Order must observe if it were to flourish :

> The superiors of the monasteries were to be of one mind.
>
> Even if there were many monasteries, there should be few friars in each.

> They should converse little with people in the world and then only for the good of their souls. They should teach more by works than by words.

And to all Carmelites, men and women, new and old, now that they were once again in peace she wrote assuaging and exhorting words:

> Let those who are now alive, who have seen these things with their own eyes, consider God's graciousness to us and the troubles and disquiet from which he has delivered us; and let those who are to come after us, who will find everything easy, for the love of our Lord never allow any observance tending to perfection to fall into disuse. Let them never give men occasion to say of them what is said of some orders "Their beginning was praiseworthy"—and we are beginning now—but let them go on from good to better. Let it never happen to them to say, "This is nothing—these are extremes."

And, as always, she concluded by calling on them to be brave, and to dare, "with a holy boldness".

25

The victory had been won—and yet there is no victory in a world where the unending process of good and evil is inextricably meshed. In the moment of success the sensitive mind is conscious of failure, as it is equally aware that truth must prevail when falsehood appears the most triumphant. Teresa had been justified before men; for the two years of life that remained for her she was to continue her work of establishing "dovecotes of the Virgin". But she was to experience also the truth of what she intuitively knew, and which she hints at in the words just quoted, that all roads lead to the same goal of failure and that the only thing the individual can do is to keep untarnished the lustre of his soul. To the saint the dust and ashes of death are the supreme good, and in its

recognition that the sooner it comes the more welcome it is Christianity is only sounding the great common chord of pessimism which runs through the religions and philosophies of all the loftiest spirits of humanity.

Since she was seven Teresa had looked forward to her deliverance. Now before its stealthy approach the knowledge how much there was for her still to do stirred her to feverish activity. Her old age was to be no time of rest and withdrawal before the end. To go on founding convents in the face of every consideration of worldly prudence, that was her work which even the infirmities of old age could not interrupt for long. In 1580, when she was sixty-five and after she had had a paralytic stroke, she fell a victim to the influenza, which in that year, " el año del catarro," ravaged Spain, apparently then, as in our own time, the starting-place of the epidemics of this fell disease. From this she never fully recovered, and her skin lost the fresh and healthy look it had had until then. Under the depression that influenza brings even Teresa's serene gaiety wilted and for the moment she " thought everything impossible ", but with characteristic courage she observed that one of the greatest trials of life was the absence of a grand spirit to keep the body in control. The daily business became more of an effort, the cold harder to bear, the fatigues of her journeys more insupportable. She had always loathed the cold. Now she felt that she could endure it no longer and even when the Voice said to her, " Do not mind the cold, I am the true warmth," it took her all her determination to start on a winter journey.

Yet this grand spirit, grown more authoritarian with age and the exercise of power, was still unconquerable. Power now was hers ; in fact, if not in name, she was the ruler of the friars and sisters of the Reformed Carmelites, for Gratian in the beginning of 1581 had been elected the first Provincial of the Reform, and what Teresa thought to-day, Gratian thought to-morrow. His appointment had not been altogether to the liking of his fellows, but Teresa

wanted it and she had her way, for the friars knew that so long as she was alive they were in reality governed by one of the astutest brains of their time.

To Teresa the problems of organization now became more arduous than ever. She was obliged to keep in touch with a constantly widening circle of monasteries, a circle ever growing under her impulse, since to stand still was to go back. The Reform must be spread until it covered the Peninsula, Europe, the whole earth—and even in Spain it had to be spread in the face of the hostility of clerics and the vulgar curiosity of the populace. The road led up-hill all the way. Opposition, indeed, could become a consolation if properly regarded, since it showed that the Devil appreciated the value of her work and did everything in his power to hinder it.

Once in this brief winter of her old age she enjoyed an Indian summer. The good Bishop Mendoza of Avila, loyal friend throughout, had been translated to Palencia and it was natural for him to urge the Saint, whom he admired and loved, to come and found a convent in his new cathedral city. She was unwilling, and so was Gratian whom she sent there to report upon the proposal. It was a poor place and there was no money. But the Voice urged her on and she changed her mind—so did Gratian. To Palencia therefore she went and was received with the utmost friendliness by all classes. In spite of this the usual difficulties arose. The house indicated for the convent was an isolated hermitage, at which the people kept vigil, and since the place was lonely everyone who watched, as Teresa remarks, " did not come out of devotion ". The image of the Virgin, also, stood in a " most unseemly place "—Our Lady of the Street was its charming, if euphemistic, appellation. Teresa however overcame all obstacles, including those put forward by the landlords, always in the habit of raising their price to sisterhoods since the presence of nunneries lowered the residential value of the neighbourhood, and the sisters were installed

amidst popular rejoicing. The good people of Palencia seemed to Teresa to possess the virtues of the primitive Christians. In spite, or perhaps in virtue of, this resemblance, the local customs attached to the vigils at the Hermitage died hard and the presence of the Carmelite nuns put no stop to the nightly watchings and their accompanying disorders, so that some years later the convent was moved elsewhere.

At Soria, where Teresa carried out another foundation, provided this time by Nicolas Doria, a member of the great Genoese family of bankers and afterwards destined, as the first Vicar-General of the Reform in Spain, to drive Gratian from the Order and into exile, she suffered the penalty of her fame. "Wherever we go," she says pathetically, "so fond is the world of novelties, the crowd is so great as to be a grave annoyance, were it not that we cover our faces with our veils and that enables us to bear it."

The sands were running out, and as the days and months slipped away the necessity of action became ever more imperious. One of her most learned friends and confessors, knowing how inexorably business pressed upon her, admitted that he used to wish she might die so that her holiness should not be placed in such continual and awful jeopardy. She herself was "willing to live a thousand lives" if thereby the glory of her Spouse might be increased. As far as the state of her soul was concerned, she had emerged from her doubts, anxieties and temptations. The ecstasies and transports had ceased, and in the holy calm of spiritual matrimony she had reached so high a degree of mystic perfection that she doubted whether any further advance were possible in this world. She and God were one; their intercourse was continuous and familiar, and she could even delight him with the sallies of her wit. Thus, when on their way to Burgos in the winter of 1582, the carriage in which she was travelling collapsed whilst they were crossing a ford and Teresa had to get out into the icy water, hurting her leg as she did so. "O Lord," she said,

" after so many sufferings this comes well indeed." " Teresa," came the answer, " it is thus that I treat My friends." " Ah ! O God," she retorted, " and that is why You have so few." They arrived at Burgos wet through; she was placed in front of a great fire to dry and in consequence was stricken down with fever.

Troubles accumulated over her and the little band of sisters she had brought to start the foundation. The corporation of Burgos might pay her a visit and assure her of their goodwill as she lay ill in bed hidden behind curtains. Of that same commodity unfortunately the Archbishop had none. Gratian, always a muddler, went to see him and only increased the archiepiscopal rage. Bishops, it appears, disliked all monasteries on principle, although they were prepared to put up with those that had endowment. So it was in the present case. But money Teresa had none. She went herself to see the Archbishop, who has earned the ungracious distinction of being the only man whom Teresa was unable to bring round to her way of thinking. Her attempt at persuasion failed, in spite of the flagellations which the sisters visited upon themselves in their lodging whilst this interview was in progress. Teresa felt that she was indeed growing old.

Everything was slipping away except the courage to endure. " Now, Teresa, hold firm," the Voice said to her when Gratian and the sisters began to counsel retreat. Retreat, however, she would not. She sent Gratian, ready to escape from the *impasse*, to Valladolid where his charm could exert itself in the Lenten pulpit, a place that sets words above works. She remained at Burgos, in the extremity of discomfort, almost a dying woman, true to herself and her sainthood. One early morning whilst she and her nuns were picking their way to Mass, Teresa asked a fish-wife to allow her to go by. " Let the old relic-monger pass," the woman jeered, and pushed her into the dirty gutter. " Silence, my daughters," said Teresa to the outraged sisters, " for the woman did exceedingly well." Again in a Burgos church some men

kicked her for not getting out of their way quickly enough, and sent her sprawling on the flags. As Sister Anne of St. Bartholomew picked her up she found her laughing heartily. Could self-control, self-abnegation, go further ? Perhaps. For when a friend had sent her oranges for which she had expressed a wish, she seized the opportunity of the absence of the other sisters to go to a ward of the Hospital where they were lodging and give them to the patients. Teresa met the reproaches of her companions with the same answer that Sir Philip Sidney three years later uttered at Zutphen, adding, " I am very glad, for I left them greatly consoled."

She would suffer all things, when only she herself were in question. But in matters concerning the Order, when the honour of God was at stake, she would never give way. So it was that the Archbishop after many " shiftings " finally yielded—for bishops in Catholic Spain as in Anglo-Catholic England were not always without reproach to their flock—and the first Mass was said in the last house Teresa was to found, on April 22, 1582, the celebrant being a certain Canon Manso, a friend of Bishop Mendoza, who had helped towards the establishment of the monastery. That in her old age Teresa showed no failing in intellectual power, or made the task of her confessors any easier than she had done in the past, is shown by the remark that the Canon, who had been acting in this capacity during Teresa's stay in Burgos, habitually made after he had been discoursing of heavenly things with the Saint ; " Blessed be God ! Blessed be God," he used to say, " but I would rather dispute with all the theologians in the world than with this woman ! "

At the end of July, Teresa, with less than three months more to live, left Burgos and after a brief stay in Palencia, went to Valladolid. There she had to suffer the utmost bitterness that can befall anyone in this world, the disloyalty of those who owed everything to her. Amongst her own spiritual daughters there were some who had begun to defy her authority.

Already at the end of the previous year she had been distressed by the falling away of the sisters at Avila, in the original St. Joseph's which she had founded twenty years before. Was her work to fail directly her own influence was removed? It looked like it. For now the prioress of the convent at Veas was showing signs of insubordination—she had acted contrary to the spirit of the Reform, in being both disobedient to her superiors and partial to her subordinates. Teresa wrote her a stern rebuke, bidding her and the sisters to act like valorous men and not like weak women. "Either your sufferings", she said, "have deprived you of your wits, or the Devil has begun to work his infernal machinations in this Order."

His Satanic Majesty was busy indeed. He had set Doria against Gratian and fomented divisions among the friars of the Reform. Gratian, too trusting, and too free with his tongue, might easily fall into his snares. She trembled for what would become of him after her death, and she adjured him to be careful of what he said in the pulpit, especially now that he was in Andalusia, where the Devil and the plague were both abroad. She added pathetically in her letter to him that she would be wretched so long as he remained there. She felt his absence keenly and though she was too magnanimous to say so, evidently thought his place was with her in Castile, where she laboured to restore the nuns to a stricter sense of discipline.

Her own family, too, turned against her, quarrelling as families so often do about the division of property. Her brother Lorenzo had died two years before and her other relations thought that Teresa had been unfair in the division of his estate. This sordid squabble enabled Teresa once more to show that self-control which is the mark of true saintliness. For when the family lawyer forced his way into her presence and roundly abused her, she only deigned to reply: "God reward Your Honour for the favour you have done me."

As if all this were not enough, the prioress of the very convent in which she was staying, Maria of the

Baptist (formerly de Ocampo), her own niece and one of the earliest members of Reform, sided with her enemies. Teresa, cut to the quick, immediately made preparations for departure. Before going, she addressed the assembled sisters: "My daughters," she said, "I leave this house greatly consoled by the perfection I see in it and the poverty, and the charity you bear one another. . . . Do not let your prayers become a mere habit, but day by day make heroic acts of still greater perfection. Accustom yourselves to great desires, for out of them great benefits may be derived, even if they cannot be put into action." With these words, repeating once more her favourite text that only from courage and infinite desire could flow infinite love, she bade them and the other sisters of the Reform farewell. As they were going the prioress pulled Anne of Bartholomew's sleeve and told her that she wished to see Teresa no more. It was, indeed, the end.

Teresa had intended to return to Avila and there, after giving the veil to her favourite niece, the little Teresita, daughter of Lorenzo, who had lived in convents since she was eight, to go on to Madrid and found a house of the Reform in the capital. Neither of these ambitions was destined to be gratified. For at Medina, she found that the Dowager Duchess of Alba had sent her coach for her, urgently praying for her presence at Alba where it was thought that Saint Teresa's prayers would help the young Duchess through the perils of her approaching confinement. The Alba family were influential and the Provincial wished Teresa to go. So to Alba she went, after a sleepless night induced by the insults of the prioress who, hearing that others in authority had refused to submit to the reproofs of the Foundress of the Order, also wished to show that she had the courage to defy the aged lioness.

The Duchess, with the thoughtlessness of the rich, had sent no money or food for the journey, and the three days' journey to Alba brought Teresa to the brink of the grave. The faithful Anne could obtain

nothing to eat, and as she looked upon the dying face of Teresa, was in despair. " I can never describe the affliction ", she wrote afterwards, " I was then in, for it seemed as if my heart was broken, and I did nothing but weep when I saw myself in such a plight —for I watched her dying and was powerless to help her." Teresa was indeed dying, but the old irony could yet throw its light on the world round her, for when, as at last they neared Alba and a messenger met them from the Duchess with the news that her daughter-in-law had been safely delivered, she said, " Thank God, this Saint will be no longer needed."

The morning after her arrival she rose and attended Mass. It was too much for her strength and she had to return to her bed from which she was to rise no more. She was broken in body, and even the old indomitable courage had gone. When Father Antonio of Jesus, her old friend who, with John of the Cross, had founded the first monastery of the Reform, came to her and kneeling beside her bed besought her not to leave them so soon, she answered : " Hush, Father, I am no longer needed in this world."

For a fortnight she lingered, whilst the nuns round her death-bed marvelled at the wonders that accompanied her end. Many were the miracles afterwards recorded by the watchers when the evidence came to be collected for her canonization. But the stamp of authenticity lies upon almost her last words, for when Father Antonio asked her whether she wished to be buried in Avila she whispered : " Jesus ! Must you ask that, my Father ? Is there anything I can call my own ? Will they not give me a little earth here ? " The prioress observed that Christ had had no house He could call His own and Teresa answered : " How well you speak, Mother. You have consoled me greatly."

With this last sublime affirmation of holy poverty, the fear of which has been called the worst moral disease in the society of our own time, she lapsed into semi-consciousness, and on the feast of St. Francis, October 4, 1582, in the sixty-eighth year of her age, she died.

MADAME DE CHOISEUL AND THE ACTUAL

SOME ASPECTS OF FEMINISM

Son siècle n'est pas digne d'elle.
Madame du Deffand to Voltaire.

Il n'y a qu'un plaisir dans ce monde : aimer et être aimé.
Madame de Choiseul.

LA DUCHESSE DE CHOISEUL

(By permission of Librairie Plon, Paris, publishers of "Le Duc et la Duchesse de Choiseul," by Gaston Maugras.)

MADAME DE CHOISEUL AND THE ACTUAL

I

IT may seem whimsical, fantastic, absurd, to set the Duchesse de Choiseul, wife of Louis XV's minister and a great lady of a court not remarkable for its virtue, beside the patroness saint of Spain. Admittedly, on the surface there is little in common between them, and the greater and lovelier part of life consists of superficial things. Teresa of Avila and the Duchesse de Choiseul thought differently, acted differently, lived and died differently. But they both loved, and each in her own way worshipped the good. Teresa, moving within the splendid framework of the Catholic Church of Rome, received her due posthumous honour. Had the trinity of the *ancien régime, esprit, goût* and *bon ton,* managed to organize its hierarchy, Madame de Choiseul assuredly would have been one of the first, or rather the last, of the saints of the salon.

She was a saint—more than a saint, indeed, for she was happier. " Votre bonheur," wrote Madame du Deffand to the Duchess on one occasion, " votre bonheur est bien plus parfait que celui des saints. Vous avez, comme eux, la jouissance éternelle de l'objêt aimé, et vous n'avez pas comme eux l'ennuyeuse uniformité des êtres qui les environnent." Whether anyone, saint or worldling, can rise securely above the chagrins of existence is open to doubt. With all her intense determination Teresa of Avila hardly managed to do so, and Madame de Choiseul in order to succeed would have required an even greater courage, in that she had no supernatural chart by which to set her course amongst the quicksands of life. She knew nothing about any world but her own, a world

in which men and women cultivated the head at the expense of the heart.

They cultivated it with exquisite grace and unquenchable gaiety. All the arts vied with each other in surrounding them with beautiful things. Their houses, their furniture, their pictures, their music, their dress, even their food, helped to impress them with the supreme virtue of elegance and their own duties as its votaries. Yet the rose, for all its loveliness, had a canker at its heart. In Madame de Choiseul's world, despite the fact that it had obtained a perfect mastery of the business of polite living, the inner springs of life had run down. Boredom was the enemy and ennui had to be kept at bay by wit, badinage, the clash of ideas and the eloquent buzzing of tongues. The synthesis was too complete; it had eliminated the unknown factors which lend human existence its sense of infinity. No wonder, no excitement could be got from religion; politics consisted of intrigues which had the royal bed for their centre; even war, in the more or less constant ill-success which had attended the French arms during the whole of the century, had ceased to exercise much glamour over the French aristocracy. Under similar conditions the rich Englishman would have found consolation in hunting the fox and shooting the partridge. The quicker-witted Frenchman sought to satisfy his hunger for adventure in gallantry.

In such surroundings did Madame de Choiseul make love the rhythm of her life. If Madame du Deffand was wrong about the Duchess's happiness, she was right about the main issue. Madame de Choiseul kept before herself one ideal—to serve and please " l'objêt aimé ". That object was her husband, and she loved him with an intense and ardent passion which she cherished none the less that it was not requited with equal intensity and ardour. The saint is able to rejoice in the sufferings inflicted by God, for these are only the marks of the Heavenly Spouse's favour. Madame de Choiseul remained equally true

to her own inner light, although its radiance had none of what has been called the "sthenic glamour" of religion. She could not even allege in self-justification that she was following the code of her class.

This, at least, could be said in favour of the morality which ruled amongst the aristocracy in the France of Louis XV—that it allowed very nearly as much freedom to women as to men. The Duc de Choiseul, an attractive product of that age of good breeding, made no pretence to marital fidelity, but it agreeably surprised him to find that his wife did not follow the fashion of other wives. It added one more amenity to a high-spirited existence which remained unembittered by ministerial cares under the reverses of the Seven Years War, or by the squibs lampooning the Pompadour and her minister Choiseul, which Frederick the Great sent to Voltaire, knowing that they would be forwarded to the proper quarter. Lost battles and lost provinces did not worry the Duc de Choiseul, but he winced under the great Frederick's bad verses. Thus, in answer to one copy of verses Choiseul wrote to his "cher solitaire" on the banks of Lake Leman: "I have a very fine and commodious house in Paris; my wife has a sprightly wit and what is really extraordinary has not cuckolded me. My family and my circle of friends I find infinitely agreeable. I love to drink and jest till four in the morning. . . . They say I have passable mistresses; for my part I find them delicious. Tell me, I pray you, even if the King of Prussia obtains soldiers twelve foot high what their master can do to deprive me of all this?"

The candour of the avowal shows an underlying honesty that contrasts favourably with the public, or semi-public utterances of politicians who serve King Demos. True, it is not the sort of letter which a prime minister would think of writing to-day; no public man in an Anglo-Saxon democracy would dare to be thus openly cynical, though we catch sometimes an echo of this tradition in the sallies of a Clemenceau, an Herriot or a Briand. It is the fashion to look

upon the Louis Quinze period as one of gilded corruption, for which Nemesis prepared the sensational punishment of the Revolution. But if it was a time of decadence, that decadence belonged to a great school, dating from the Renaissance and going back to Greece and Rome. The French Court had been the school of European manners for two and a half centuries and still ruled the cultured life of Europe. What is more, we cannot afford to lose that tradition of manners without destroying the only conception of civilization which is European in its origin and its growth. The Duchesse de Choiseul holds out the torch of this tradition for her sisters of our day to light their own at its clear, bright flame.

2

One of the peculiarities of that society, wherein women had used their hegemony to achieve, not an economic but a moral and intellectual equality with men, was the importance laid upon marriage. Until a girl had a husband she had no social status. The idea which prevails in contemporary England amongst what used to be called the leisured classes, that a girl should gain some experience of the world, should learn something about life and the relations of the sexes before proceeding from the general to the particular, would have shocked the by no means prudish circle of Madame de Choiseul. Then a girl entered the great world on the arm of her husband, or not at all. Her entry made, she might withdraw her hand, so long as she was pleased to observe a minimum of discretion. But no period intervened between the regime of the schoolroom and of the *gouvernante* on the one hand, and the blessed freedom which could only be won at the altar on the other.

Louise Honorine Crozat du Châtel, afterwards to be Duchesse de Choiseul, followed the general rule. She would in any case have had little difficulty in obtaining a husband, since she had a dowry of some

£10,000 a year and more. This fortune came to her as the daughter and co-heiress of the Marquis du Châtel whose father, a self-made man, had gained immense wealth through farming the taxes and speculations in French America. The Duchess's grandfather, Crozat, who died a millionaire, had been ennobled by the Regent. He had bought the Breton lordship of Châtel from which he took his name, and it is a piquant commentary on the privilege of birth that the Duchess, who represented everything that was finest in the culture of an exclusive aristocracy, should have been innocent of a great-grandfather.

She was, however, fortunate in her parents. Both her father and her mother, whose blood was blue, had good brains. Her father confessed that he had taught himself to think, as others taught themselves to dance and play the flute. A timid, donnish little man with an "obscure physiognomy", he had a Scotch foible for dissecting ideas. His contemporaries thought that he took himself perhaps a trifle too seriously, was too metaphysical, and lectured rather than talked, but they admitted that he possessed the essential *esprit* without which all other qualities were vain. The Duchess's mother was a clever woman, a gay and witty conversationalist, whose only fault in the eyes of her friend and relative, Madame du Deffand, lay in a timidity which prevented her from opening her heart and giving it away in the confidence that she was loved. Whether this timidity went so far as to prevent any intimacy with her children we know not—there is no shyness like that between parents and their offspring. But the business of being a woman of fashion was never more arduous than at that time, and left little leisure for the indulgence of the maternal instinct. The intellectual discipline of conversation, the physical discipline of the toilet were enough to absorb the energies of the strongest. Extremes meet; only those with robust constitutions could stand the racket of fashionable life in 18th-century France, or the austerities of the

Teresan reform in the Spain of two centuries before.

Whether the Marquise du Châtel lacked the inclination, or the strength, she took no more than a perfunctory interest in her daughter Louise Honorine. "Ma fille, n'ayez pas de goûts," was the only rule of life which she ever seems to have given her. People thought that so intelligent a mother would naturally see to it that her daughter should have a good education. They were mistaken. Though in after life the Duchess very rarely spoke of her youth, she said enough to show that she was neglected and unhappy. Her early education was "completely null", perhaps after all the best sort, she adds dryly, since one is not then given the errors of others. What she learnt was not from books or people, but from the scrapes into which she fell, and whilst extolling the hard school of suffering she emphasizes the need of courage. "On a souvent besoin de faire du courage. . . . Oh! combien j'en ai fait dans ma vie." Except that the mood is more resigned, more stoical, the Duchesse de Choiseul is only echoing the words of Teresa of Avila.

Such is all we know of the girlhood of the most accomplished woman within the inner ring of the oldest aristocracy in Europe. Though her expectations made her an eligible bride for the wealthy scion of any noble family, a husband, in her case, was not chosen from any calculation of nicely balanced less or more. In the usual sense of a bargain between parents, he was not indeed chosen at all, for pathetic and unusual circumstances surrounded the origins of a love that was to dominate her life.

Her elder sister, senior by six years, had made a brilliant match with the Duc de Gontaut, whose social flair and mastery of the courtier's art were as remarkable as his lack of personal ambition; both the King and Madame de Pompadour enjoyed the graces of his society the more in that he sought no favours in return. But if the Duke had no ambition for himself—an inertness that had earned for him the unmerited sobriquet of the White Eunuch—he had

much for his friend, the Comte de Stainville and the future Duc de Choiseul, then a young man of good family and little money, who had made a reputation at the wars by his dash on the battle-field and his sagacity at headquarters. His Duchess shared his feelings. Rumour declared that she did more, and the Comte de Stainville was generally believed to play the familiar rôle of lover of his friend's wife. In 1747, when Louise Honorine was in her thirteenth year, it happened that her elder sister gave birth to a son and heir. Though medicine was then beginning to emerge from its long period of empiricism qualified by superstition, midwifery still jogged along its old septic path, taking heavy toll of the fashionable beauties whose nerves were the prey of dissipation as were their limbs of corsets. One of these victims was the youthful Duchesse de Gontaut. Soon after her delivery fever set in and carried her off in three days, but not before she had obtained, on her death-bed, a promise from her younger sister that she would marry the Comte de Stainville whose fortune would thus be assured. The engagement was faithfully kept and three years later the marriage was duly celebrated, to the surprise of those not in the secret, since the fortune of the husband was far from being equal to that of his bride.

Yet, if the Count had no money to speak of, he treated it with the nonchalance of the grand seigneur. At the time of his marriage litigation was proceeding between his wife and her uncles, for these claimed a considerable portion of the property which had belonged to her lately deceased father. Had she and her sister's heirs lost their case, their inheritance would have been much diminished. Prudence, and even the bride's mother, had advised postponing the wedding until the courts had given their decision. The Count would not hear of this, and when the judgment was delivered in favour of the uncles, he took it light-heartedly, assuring his mother-in-law that in spite of everything he would become an

ambassador and buy an estate worth £15,000 a year. He and the Duc de Gontaut appealed, and in due course the case came before the higher court. The anxieties of a lawsuit had not interfered with the Duke's gallantries. For some time the widower had been nourishing a violent passion for a certain Madame Rossignol, and bombarding his brother-in-law with the question: "Mon frère, croyez-vous que Madame Rossignol m'aime?" Whilst the pair were seated in court, listening to the reading of the judgment which upheld that of the lower court, the Count turned to the Duke and said: "Mon frère, croyez-vous que Madame Rossignol vous aime?" whereupon to the vast astonishment of everyone in court, judges included, the two unsuccessful appellants burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter at a moment when they were apparently faced with ruin. The gesture is sufficient for us to acquit Madame de Choiseul of having given her heart to a man who had married her for her money. In the end a decree of Parlement gave her and her husband the enjoyment of their fortune.

3

Of the first years of her married life we know little except that they were unhappy. She and her husband lived with her mother, Madame du Châtel, whose roof also sheltered the Duc de Gontaut and his infant son, the Duc de Lauzun, who narrowly escaped being burnt to death when in his swaddling clothes, only to end his life on the scaffold. It was a household entirely devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, a pursuit, however, from which the young Countess was soon barred by ill health. Although early marriage might solve many problems of manners and morals, it had the disadvantage of being based on a faulty physiology, for it often entailed girls bearing children before they themselves had ceased growing. In the case of the Comtesse de Stainville a miscarriage induced a fever from which she barely escaped with her life,

leaving her delicate health permanently impaired. There is no reason to suppose that the Count was wanting in solicitude. Yet so lively and susceptible a man, passionately addicted to the commerce of the salon and the boudoir, and exerting over every company in which he happened to be a fascination deplored by some men and adored by all women, could not long remain in attendance by the *chaise longue* of the shy, ailing girl, his wife. He soon became infatuated with the Princesse de Robecq, and the Countess, who with her hand and fortune had unwisely also given her heart, found the traditional sweetness of her seventeen years tainted by the gall of seeing the man she loved the slave of a woman whose beauty, charm, and amours were the talk of Paris.

It was thus that the Countess made the first draft on her courage—there were to be many more in the future! She employed her time in reading and in formulating for herself a standard of conduct which should have duty for its goal and self-respect for its motive. The thing was not so difficult as might be thought, since in the words of Madame du Deffand, to the youth of Hebe she joined the wisdom of Nestor. Rousseau had just then leaped into fame with his "Discours sur les Arts et Sciences" and she found herself in agreement with the morality which the prophet of modern democracy was beginning to preach. But despite her innate rationalism she had no great belief in the subtleties of metaphysical reasoning. A feminine distrust of logic refined the intellectual power inherited from her father. "Ne faites point aux autres ce que vous ne voudriez pas qu' on vous fît." That, she said, was the basis of morality and it should be a sufficient guide for the most complicated problems of life. A simple rule, taken straight from the first principles of Christianity; it was the tragedy, the misfortune, the folly, or the greatness, of Louise Honorine, Comtesse de Stainville and Duchesse de Choiseul, that she played the game by different rules than the rest. To her, love meant one thing; to

the Princesse de Robecq it meant something else; and, since we are predatory animals, the Princess's morality cannot be condemned on the ground that it ran counter to the instincts which Nature—Rousseau's God—has implanted in the heart of woman.

Whilst the Countess thus moulded her character to suffer without retaliation, and to remain constant to the principles inspired by her heart and fortified by her head, the Count was preparing himself for the dukedom he was to win through a career in diplomacy and statecraft. He might spend the afternoons and evenings in the lap of pleasure, but his mornings were devoted to assiduous study, so that when the door of advancement opened his natural abilities should not be handicapped by the idleness of his youth. A career, however, could only come through the favour of the King, or rather of Madame de Pompadour, and the Count, probably because he despised the sort of men she raised to high office, openly expressed his antipathy to the royal mistress. This neglect, or disdain, was the despair of the Duc de Gontaut, always anxious to see his brother-in-law win a place worthy of his powers. Subsequently the enemies of the statesman asserted that his attitude was cunningly contrived to excite the resentment of the Marquise in order to make his amends all the more striking. The facts do not bear this out. Although a woman's indiscretion put in his hands the threads of an intrigue which touched the *lit du roi*, there is no evidence that he came by this knowledge dishonourably, or that having done so he planned to use it to his own advantage.

He tells the story himself with his usual frankness. Since it resulted in making his wife, whether she wished it or not, one of the leaders of a society whose freedom she already had reason to rue, and since, too, it shows the impulsive nonchalance which contributed to the charm that women found irresistible, it may not be out of place to tell it once more. On one of his rare visits to the Court, then at Fontainebleau, the Count

ran across his cousin, M. de Choiseul-Romanet, who was wild with anger because his wife had drawn on herself the attentions of the King. With the impetuosity of the Choiseuls the outraged husband declared he would set fire to the Château, and the Count, telling him not to be a fool, paid a call on his cousin's wife to see whether there was anything in the story. She believed him to be sympathetic and made him her confidant. The King was madly in love with her, she declared, but she had refused to yield until Madame de Pompadour had been exiled. Letters in the King's hand bore out this astonishing menace against the royal favourite who had ruled France for seven years.

Her cousin took the matter very differently from the way Madame de Romanet had expected. Instead of advice, he gave her an ultimatum ; she must leave Fontainebleau within four days or else he would divulge everything to her husband. He said that he did not profess to be pedantic in the affairs of love, and she might do what she pleased with the King, or anyone else, so long as it were in secret and without any appearance of gaining credit. But that she should be officially recognized as the royal mistress was dishonouring to the family of Choiseul and he would have none of it. Madame de Romanet, who was in the fifth month of pregnancy, found tears and anger alike unavailing to turn the Count from his purpose and she ended by giving him the promise he demanded.

In the meantime Madame de Pompadour poured out her fears to the Duc de Gontaut and the Duke related them to his brother-in-law. The Count observed that he was indifferent to Madame de Pompadour's troubles, but that he could not help laughing that a word from him would be able to set her at her ease—adding mischievously that he had not the least desire to secure Madame de Pompadour her peace of mind. On hearing this news from her friend, she sent for the Comte de Stainville. The Count, who knew the rules of the game, paid no attention to her summons, and it was only when the Duke himself

went to bring him that he consented to wait on the woman whose fate seemed to have been already decided. Even then the Count was haughty and reserved, but finally giving way to the tearful entreaties of the Marquise, he told her the story of his intervention with Madame de Romanet and assured her that she was leaving the Court. From that moment the Comte de Stainville and Madame de Pompadour became the closest friends. The intimacy soon had a practical issue and in the following year he was appointed Ambassador in Rome, though Madame de Pompadour had some trouble in overcoming the King's frankly expressed unwillingness to appoint as his representative the man who had robbed him of a mistress. His success there and in Vienna, whither he was sent to cement the alliance with Maria Theresa, led, four years later, to his being appointed first minister to the King and created Duc de Choiseul. As a pendant to this story, out of which arose the career of Choiseul as a European statesman and that of his wife as a great lady, it may be added that the unfortunate Madame de Romanet died in giving birth to the child which had been the ostensible reason for her withdrawal from Court.

4

The Duchesse de Choiseul, to call her for the future by the title which she holds in history, thus found herself, at the age of eighteen, the leading hostess in Rome. The change from the semi-seclusion to which her ill-health in Paris had condemned her was the more agreeable since the cause of her chagrin had been removed and the Duke, brilliantly successful in exercising his art of seduction on the Pope and his court—an art made up of high spirits, wit, insolence and bribery—was not drawn to include the Roman ladies in his conquests. Princes of the Church, prelates, Generals of the Religious Orders, scientists, archæologists, artists, met in the salons of the Ambassa-

dress and agreed in extolling the gracious young Frenchwoman. 'Cette femme," said one of these elderly clerics, " a de l'esprit comme une ange et tout autant de mérite."

Both she and the Duke dazzled the Romans. The free rein he gave his purse and tongue contrasted with the hypocrisy and avarice of a society where " cardinals, prelates and laymen thought only how they could harm each other ", and the Duchess, who could talk on all subjects and, better still, listen to others talking, had a modesty and feminine grace to which the proud but unpolished Roman matrons, with their *cicisbeos*, their " cavalier-servants ", could not pretend.

The Eternal City proved a happy university for the Duchess's graduation in the world of everyday things. Her social duties, which never lay lightly upon her, were not too arduous. Except during the Carnival there was very little organized pleasure, and the Roman aristocracy did not attempt to repay the hospitality so freely offered by the French Ambassador. If his table was the resort of a motley throng where the conversation was often as heavy as the draperies on a Bernini saint, a more intimate circle met in the Duchess's drawing-room. This consisted of the Embassy staff, with one or two chosen spirits of the diplomatic corps, and there the talk flowed and sparkled with the same careless elegance as round the supper tables at Versailles or in the Faubourg St. Honoré. If the Duke was always the life of the party, the Duchess was not less its soul, and the impetuous wit of the Duke found a foil, as the delicate taste of the Duchess a support, in the urbanity of the Abbé Barthélemy.

The Abbé Barthélemy, destined to play so important a rôle in the Duchess's life, was the beau-ideal of a class which, at its best, did credit to humanity. It did not produce enthusiasm or the desire to save souls, but the French Abbé, when true to type, was a scholar and a gentleman. His orders, or minor orders, sat lightly on his tonsured head and his only

share in the work of the Church Militant was to draw revenues from its endowments. Like everyone else he paid outward respect to the established religion, but he was more concerned with this world than the next, and if he ever mentioned the Trinity it was probably in the tone of well-bred irony necessitated by the failure of its Third Person to achieve the standard of *esprit* which 18th-century France demanded. Horace and Virgil were his breviary, and he was more conversant with Ovid's "Ars Amatoria" than with the Song of Songs. In addition to the solid grounding of a seminary education, he had the advantage over his lay fellow place-hunters that he could be a wit without being expected to be a gallant, and could talk to great ladies about love without necessarily having to make it.

Of this class the Abbé Barthélemy was a most accomplished specimen. A numismatist and archæologist of real talent, he had followed the Ambassador to Rome to collect for the royal cabinets the coins and antiques of which Madame de Pompadour was a connoisseur. His acquaintance with the Duke and Duchess had previously been of the slightest. The Duke had seen him once and been attracted by his personality. That, and his considerable qualifications, had been sufficient to secure him the offer of a post on the ambassadorial staff, and as soon as he could be relieved of his functions as Curator of the King's coins, he joined his new chief in Rome.

The Duchess had promised to interest herself in his work. Better than her word she occupied the months that preceded his arrival in taking lessons in archæology, so that when the Abbé arrived he was enchanted to find that not only was the Ambassadress ready to appreciate his researches and acquisitions, but that he was to have as his collaborator a young woman who seemed to unite in herself every quality that could adorn her sex. Under such circumstances and in the excursions they took almost daily to the Palatine, the Forum, and the other famous sites of Imperial Rome, the acquaintance rapidly developed

into friendship. On the Abbé's side it became more. His love for the Duchess, in its renunciation and self-effacement, had the same beauty as hers for her husband and entailed greater self-control in that it could never be completely avowed. She, on her side, found in the Abbé's society the companionship and sympathy the Duke did not give her, and he became as much a part of her life as she of his.

The relations between these two are a standing refutation of the denial that Platonic love is unable to stand the strain that close intimacy lays on those of different sex. A portrait of the Duchess he wrote in those early days of their intimacy is worth quoting: "Madame de Choiseul, hardly eighteen years of age, enjoyed that profound veneration commonly only given to those who have long practised the virtues. Everything to do with her inspired interest, her youth, her figure, her delicate health, the vivacity which animated her words and actions, the desire to please, which she could so easily satisfy and the success of which she ascribed to her husband, who was the worthy object of her tenderness and devotion, that extreme sensitiveness which caused her to reflect the happiness or sorrow of others, and above all a purity of soul which prevented her from suspecting evil. It was charming to observe such intelligence joined with such simplicity. She could reason at an age when others had hardly commenced to think." Such is the first description we have of a woman who was to impress all who met her with the beauty of her character, and the depth and precision of her mind.

5

The purity of soul which prevented her from suspecting evil was soon to be put to the test of life at the French Court. Had the circle in which the Duchess moved been that of the pious Queen Marie Leczinska or of the still more pious Dauphin and his wife, she would not have run the risk of evil communications

corrupting her good ways. The infinitely livelier and cleverer, but also infinitely more wicked, coterie of which the moving spirit was the Pompadour was another matter.

After four years of diplomacy the Duke's exceptional abilities, his way of treating everybody and everything, from the Pope to the Seven Years War, by hurricane methods—he had purposely made Benedict XV so angry at an audience that the Holy Father grew purple in the face and pushed the French Ambassador round the audience chamber—had led to his appointment as Prime Minister. Thus at the age of twenty-three the Duchess found herself the wife of the all-powerful statesman whom Catherine of Russia nicknamed the "cocher de l'Europe" from the summary style of his political craftsmanship. The twelve years during which he governed France were to be for the Duchess a period in which the honour of her position in no way compensated for her failure to gain sole possession of the Duke's heart.

The Duc de Choiseul, his previous antipathy to Madame de Pompadour now exchanged for feelings of the warmest regard, saw nothing derogatory in introducing his wife into the circle of the favourite, though he had professed to be outraged when his cousin had attempted to secure the position of royal mistress. Neither did the Duchess. She consented in the first instance doubtless out of desire to please her husband and from gratitude to his benefactress. But she soon grew to love the woman who was the very antithesis of herself. Many disgraceful things have been brought home to Madame de Pompadour. The fact remains that this adventuress and procuress managed not only to attract to herself a woman like the Duchesse de Choiseul, who utterly refused later to have anything to do with Madame du Barry, but to keep her friendship till the end.

The Duchess's regard for Madame de Pompadour was thoroughly genuine. We find her expressing the keenest solicitude when it had become evident that the favourite's struggle to maintain her power had

brought her, at the age of forty-three, to the verge of the grave. "Je nage dans la joie," she writes to Madame du Deffand, when the bulletin is better and the doctors assure her that their patient is in no danger. Yet she cannot help being anxious, for she loves her. "Et comment ne l'aimerais-je pas?" she adds. "Je joins pour elle l'estime à la reconnaissance." The Duchess, when she wrote that, had been for seven or eight years an almost daily visitor to Madame de Pompadour and a constant guest at the supper-parties in her apartments at Versailles or Fontainebleau, where the King in the small circle of the royal intimates threw off etiquette and desired only to be amused. Madame de Choiseul had had plenty of opportunities to observe the character of Madame de Pompadour; that she was able to command the Duchess's esteem is a proof of her qualities. It was, of course, broad-minded of the Duchess to associate with the Pompadour, the more broad-minded, said the gossips, since the Duke had succeeded his master in the Pompadour's favour, a rumour based on nothing more substantial than spite and envy.

Under the lighted candelabra, amid the thrust of epigram and paradox, in a society "catholique le matin, idolâtre le soir, et pervertie toujours", the Duchess might keep her purity of soul, even while she associated with a woman whose favours were refused by the only man who preached a pure morality; for although the Duchess might have stigmatized Rousseau as a charlatan of virtue, he alone fled from the patronage of the Pompadour. It was not so easy to keep her health and spirits. Life had not always the brilliant surface that we associate with the Louis Quinze period, the ladies had not always the bright serenity that Nattier gives them, nor the conversation the burnished wit of Voltaire and the sheen that should go with silks and satins. Sometimes it seemed that tongues merely wagged and that she moved in the centre of a vast and empty rattle. Had she too much sensibility? It might be. No one, except the Abbé,

perhaps, and to him she could not unburden herself on this point, understood her feelings about her husband. Even Madame du Deffand thought she was asking too much in expecting him to repay fidelity with fidelity. The Duchess had no longer any doubt that he could not love her as she loved him. From Vienna, where the Duke had spent a year as Ambassador following their stay in Rome, a certain Princess Kinski had pursued him to Paris. He had also renewed his liaison with the Princesse de Robecq. That was not all. The Duke's sister, the Duchesse de Grammont, who had enormous influence over her brother, showed a dislike for her sister-in-law in proportion to the harshness and intolerance of her own over-bearing nature, and did her best to make her brother share her feelings.

Madame de Choiseul was unhappy. Besides this chagrin, the rush of life at Court proved too much for her delicate health. She " drowned herself in the crowd at Fontainebleau " and longed for the peace of mind and body which she could only obtain in the country. Versailles was worse. She got to bed at two or three in the morning only to be torn from it betimes by the barber who had come to finish a dressing begun the day before. She describes it to Madame du Deffand : " . . . Four heavy hands weigh on my poor head. If that were only all ! The tongs ring, the curling papers crackle in my ears. ' That's too hot.' . . . ' What dressing does Madame wish to-day ? ' ' This one suits such and such a dress.' ' Angelique, do my curls.' . . . ' Marianne, get the basket ready.' . . . You realize 'tis the all-powerful Tintin who thus commands. She has been trying hard to clean my watch with an old glove, and shows me that the back is still tarnished. Much besides. An officer holds forth on the expulsion of the Jesuits. Two doctors argue, I believe of war ; else they make it on each other. An Archbishop shows me some architectural design. One person wishes to catch my eye, another my interest. All want my attention. You alone have my heart. They call from the next room :

'Madame, 'tis the quarter! The King is on his way to Mass.' 'Come, be quick! My bonnet, my coif, my muff, my fan, my prayer-book! I mustn't shock anyone. My chair, my porters, let's be off!' . . . I return from Mass. A woman I know enters at my heels. She is in full dress and my tiny boudoir is filled with the expanse of her furbelows. She wishes me to go on writing. 'I shall do nothing of the kind, Madame. I will not be my own enemy to the extent of depriving myself of the pleasure of seeing and listening to you, Madame.' . . . At last she has gone. Now I can resume. But they come to tell me that the Paris courier is leaving. He asks if Madame has anything for him to take. 'I should think so. I'm writing to my dear child. Let him wait.' A young Irish woman comes to ask me for a favour which I don't mean to obtain, a manufacturer from Tours to thank me for another which I did not obtain. Someone comes to present his brother whom I won't see. There isn't a soul, including Mademoiselle Fel, who does not wait upon me. I hear the drum. The chairs in my antechamber are upset. 'Tis the officers of the Swiss Guards hurrying down to the quadrangle. The butler comes to ask me if I wish dinner served. He warns me that the drawing-rooms are full, that the Duke has returned and is ready to dine. Come, I must stop. There is an exact picture of everything I underwent yesterday and to-day whilst writing to you, and all on top of the other. Haven't I reason to be tired of people? . . ."

This letter, it is true, dates from a few years later, when the fatigue of the life of a great lady had come to press more hardly on the Duchess's health, if not on her spirits. But from the first she never found perfectly congenial the rôle she filled with such exquisite distinction.

6

ADMITTEDLY she was one of the ornaments of the Court. Virtue became her. Decorous behaviour did

not take the edge off her tongue. Her propriety sparkled. Melancholy, and here she agreed with St. Teresa, was no mere defect but a malady of the soul. She did not interpret the great game of life by the same rules as the others, but that did not drive her to cynicism, for " every cynic was a knave or a liar ". On the contrary it made her the more charitable. Yet she could not quite prevent others from recognizing her superiority, though she tried hard to convince everyone, as did Teresa, that she was no better than they. It is the penalty of greatness to be lonely, and Madame de Choiseul in her world of aristocratic privilege which had anticipated within its own borders the *liberté, égalité, fraternité* of the Revolution, was in her own case unable to persuade others of the truth of the second of these catchwords. In her presence people found themselves inhibited by a kind of timid embarrassment. " You are, as it were," wrote Madame du Deffand, " the touchstone which makes others know their true selves by the difference they cannot help seeing between themselves and you." For that reason the Duchesse de Choiseul never led the society which she adorned. She could not disguise that she was " a saint, a model and example for other women ", which if it did not gall her own sex caused the other to find its armoury of gallantry mere useless lumber.

Not that the Duchess, like her friend the Pompadour, was cold. On the contrary, natural warmth and passion were hers ; if Nature had not endowed her with an intelligence out of the ordinary, an intelligence strengthened by habits of reflection inherited from her metaphysical father, she would have been anything but a paragon of virtue. It was thus, indeed, that the general feeling of that free-living society found it hardest to overlook the self-restraint, not of indifference but of sheer mastery of will. " You hold firmly ", again the diagnosis comes from the acute mind of Madame du Deffand, whose own morals had been entirely of the age, " all the springs of your being in your hands, and without losing an iota of

your spontaneity you resist and overcome all the impressions which could impair the wisdom and equableness of your conduct." The key of it all she admitted was courage, the greater since it was exercised without any appearance of effort.

Society often takes its revenge on those who escape slander by turning against them the battery of ridicule. To attempt that upon the Duchesse de Choiseul would of itself have been ridiculous. "Esteem and approbation" were the only feelings to express in connexion with one so intelligent and lively, whose wit played like summer lightning on every topic of conversation, from the gossip at the King's supper table, the data for which was provided by the letters opened in the *cabinet noir* of the royal post, to the epigrammatic worship of reason in the salon of Madame du Deffand.

Her personality at once impressed the English who after the Seven Years War flocked to Paris to enjoy the elegancies of polite life at its fountain-head. "Il n'y a point d'Anglais qui tiendrait contre un pareil charme"—thus the Duke of Bedford's partiality for the Duchesse was explained. At Compiègne, the Duke of York, brother to George III, introduced to a bevy of the great ladies of the Court, including the Duchesse de Choiseul, her sister-in-law the Duchesse de Grammont, and the Maréchale de Mirepoix, notorious for her past amours and present debts, observed that he could only wholly approve the King's choice in the case of Madame de Choiseul, a remark that occasioned enormous merriment when it came out that the Duke's limited knowledge of French had led him to think that all these ladies were the King's mistresses.

Horace Walpole, loving Paris almost better than Strawberry Hill, yielded to no one in his admiration for the Duchess. "My last new passion," he writes, "and I think the strongest, is the Duchesse de Choiseul. Her face is pretty, not very pretty; her person a little model. Cheerful, modest, full of attentions, with the happiest propriety of expression and greatest quickness

of reason and judgment, you would take her for the queen of an allegory; one dreads its finishing, as much as a lover, if she would admit one, would wish it should finish. . . ." Thanks to his intimacy with Madame du Deffand, Horace Walpole was able to see a great deal of the Duchess, then in the full prime of her thirty-three years, and he returns again and again to the subject of her fascination. "The Duchess of Choiseul, the only young one of these heroines, is not very pretty but has fine eyes and is a little model in wax-work, which not being allowed to speak for some time as incapable, has a hesitation and modesty, the latter of which the Court has not cured, and the former of which is atoned for by the most interesting sound of voice and forgotten in the most elegant turn and propriety of expression. Oh, it is the gentlest, amiable, little civil creature that ever came out of a fairy egg! So just in its phrases and thoughts, so attentive and good-natured! Everybody loves it but its husband."

The Duc de Choiseul appeared by no means a sympathetic figure to Walpole, who disapproved of his politics and considered his "restless ambition" a danger to Europe. Such differences may have been the reason of the coolness which he met with at the Duke's hands, so different from the civility of his wife, who had "more parts, reason and agreeableness" than he had ever met with in such a delicate figure, and he more than once refers to the inability of the Duke to appreciate the charms of his Duchess. "It is the prettiest little reasonable amiable Titania you ever saw—but Oberon does not love it. He prefers a great, mortal Hermione, his sister."

The interest of Horace Walpole in his latest passion even went so far as her clothes. "I supped last night", he writes, "with the Duchess of Choiseul and saw a magnificent robe she is to wear to-day for the great wedding of a Biron and a Boufflers. It is of blue satin, embroidered all over in a mosaic, diamond-wise, with gold, and surrounded with spangles

in the same way; it is trimmed with double sables, crossed with frogs and tassels of gold; her head, neck, breast and arms covered with diamonds." When, after his return to London, he discovered a snuff-box bearing the portrait of Madame de Sevigné, whom, as a letter-writer himself, he admired above all women, had been mysteriously placed on his table without any indication of the donor except a letter purporting to come from the Marquise in the Elysian Fields, his vanity was flattered to think that it had been sent by the most accomplished lady of the most accomplished city in Europe, and he made no secret of his belief that the Duchess had given him this mark of her regard. When he discovered that it came from Madame du Deffand, Walpole was chagrined; there was nothing flattering to his male vanity in such a present from an old woman, and it reflected, too, on his perspicacity that he could have been thus mistaken.

Walpole, perhaps, never quite forgave the Duchess for not having sent him that snuff-box. Maybe, also, he felt that his "passion" had not been sufficiently returned. Madame du Deffand tried her hardest to cement their friendship and under her eager care Walpole followed her family jest in addressing the Duchess as "chère grand'maman"—a former Duchesse de Choiseul had been one of Madame du Deffand's grandparents—and in signing himself "votre affectionné petit-fils". Madame de Choiseul was too shy to enter into a correspondence with so redoubtable an antagonist "who put in six lines what she said in twelve pages". She was probably the less anxious on account of the coolness between Walpole and her husband. Yet she often sent kind messages through Madame du Deffand to the capricious Englishman who, on his side, took the Duke's part against Madame du Barry and her faction whom he "detested". In the summer of 1775, when Walpole was on a visit to Paris, the Duchess wrote the most pressing invitation for him to come to Chanteloup with Madame du Deffand, in spite of the fact that she knew Walpole had been un-

reasonably annoyed with his elderly friend for the visit she had paid her at their château a few years before.

Somehow or other the friendship never bore fruit, and in the end Walpole's feelings for the Duchess were coloured by rancour. When Madame du Deffand died, she and the Abbé Barthélemy reclaimed their letters to her before Horace Walpole had had time to act. He thus writes about the matter in 1784, nearly twenty years after he had first declared himself the Duchess's admirer: " . . . I have no great reason to interest myself about the Duchess of Choiseul, or the Abbé Barthélemy. . . . I have little opinion of the Duchess's regard for me. Though they both *seized* their letters before I could have any notice, yet as I had already ordered them to be restored without being acquainted with that proceeding they at least owe me an apology. I never received a word from either. In the Abbé it was an impertinence; a great lady cannot be in the wrong, though she had professed so much friendship for me, and still more for my dear late friend. . . . Had they any delicacy it would have taught them how to act." Thus did the man of sixty belie his former self at forty.

7

WHATEVER the respective merits of Horace Walpole and the Duchess in the epistolary art, she was his superior in charity, and on her conduct in what from a worldly point of view was the crisis of her life, he said things afterwards that were meant to wound. If the Duchess acted without delicacy in reclaiming her letters, he wrote without delicacy when, in passing under review the circumstances which led to the Duke's fall as the result of Madame du Barry's intrigues, he observed that the Duke had been driven from power because he wished to be agreeable to two ladies who seemed to think that it was impossible to be a whore with impunity unless one were a great lady.

Those two ladies were of course his wife and sister,

Mesdames de Choiseul and de Grammont, and Walpole's libellous remark was the greater since it was in part true. After Madame de Pompadour's death the small circle which she gathered round herself had continued to meet. She had been dead only a few days when the King repaired once more to the late favourite's *petits appartements*, which had been left just as they were, and resumed the supper-parties that had been the feature of Court life under the Pompadour's régime. The King's intimates at these remained unchanged, and consisted of the Duc de Choiseul and his Duchess, Madame de Grammont, the Maréchale de Mirepoix, the Duc de Gontaut, and the Prince and Princesse de Beauveu. In this little coterie the King was content, and since he found satisfaction for his voluptuous desires with the young women of the Parc aux Cerfs there appeared no reason why the Duke should not remain in power so long as the King lived.

The appearance of Madame du Barry need not have destroyed this equilibrium, for the new favourite was aware of her deficiencies of birth and education, and she had none of the political ambition of Madame de Pompadour. If she had been admitted to the royal supper table she would have been perfectly ready to cultivate the good graces of the great ladies who had been established there by her predecessor. But she found the first step towards this, which was her presentation at Court, bitterly opposed by the Duke, and when finally she triumphed, Madame de Choiseul, followed by Mesdames de Grammont and de Beauveu, intimated to the King that they desired to be excused from attendance any longer at the *petits appartements*. Thus Madame du Barry gained her point and had been presented only to find herself openly flouted and the King's mode of life seriously deranged. To the disgust of the Duchess, Madame de Mirepoix, the sister of the Prince de Beauveu, ratted and continued to attend the supper-parties, being in consequence ostracized by the Choiseul party.

This exhibition of feminine anger made it difficult for the King to create a new circle of intimates, though whilst the two factions rent the Court he continued to cherish the hope of seeing an *entente* established between his new mistress and his old minister.

Not too much delicacy on the part of Madame de Choiseul, but the want of it on that of the masterful Madame de Grammont, made any compromise impossible. The Duke was an impulsive person whose likes and dislikes were gaily determined. He had come to power through one royal mistress and it was absurd to suppose that moral scruples should now prevent him from remaining in power by recognizing another. Madame du Barry, as Madame du Deffand very sensibly pointed out, was a stick of which the grandpapa could have made what use he liked, and she added that she did not consider Madame de Grammont had advised him well in this matter. It is noteworthy that she did not add the name of the Duchesse de Choiseul. In reality the Duchess played only a secondary rôle in fomenting hostility against Madame du Barry, a fact of which Louis XV was aware. She had already begun to pass a good deal of her time at Chanteloup, the property she had bought near Amboise, where she found the quiet that Paris denied her, and where, too, she escaped the interference of her sister-in-law, who shared their house in the capital. It delighted her to exchange the intrigues of the Court for the pleasures of country life, enlivened by the presence of Abbé Barthélemy and by the excitement of making additions to the Château. At the same time the Duchess could not stand aside. She had to declare herself. No doubt it galled her to see a young woman, whose good nature could not disguise her want of good breeding, striving to force her way into their select circle. That, however, should not have caused Madame de Choiseul any great annoyance since, in any case, the *tracasseries* of Versailles bored her to death. The fact was that her timidity towards her husband prevented her from

attempting to influence him in another sense from that which his sister urged so strongly. Her habitual self-distrust probably made her believe that this in any case would have been unsuccessful, so in order to show that she had a will of her own, and from jealousy of her sister-in-law, Titania even outdid the great mortal Hermione in asseverating that she would never associate with the Comtesse du Barry.

Maybe this ill became her, but it throws a more reasonable light on her one lapse from reasonableness. Madame de Grammont's animosity also was said to have been based on grounds more solid than those of the virtuous indignation of a great lady of Louis XV's Court at being expected to welcome a new royal mistress, whose impertinent beauty and charm had brought the breath of the streets of Paris to Versailles. She, too, was jealous, but hers was the jealousy of wounded vanity. For Madame de Grammont, it was whispered, had hoped that she herself might be singled out by the King, a prospect that offered still greater possibilities to ambition since the death of the Queen in the preceding year. Louis, it was true, strict in nothing else, held strict views about kingly marriages, and he had observed to the Duke that he had no intention of setting up another Maintenon. Still, Louis was an easy-going monarch, and we may do Madame de Grammont the credit of believing that she was not guided by a prejudice quite so unreasoning as Walpole suggested. In any case, to regret that the Duchesse de Choiseul did not act differently, that she did not tell the Duke to disregard his sister's advice and so avoid precipitating a crisis which would only end his career, is to regret that her character was not other than it was. Women, to quote St. Teresa, are reverent and timid, and the Duchess—most courageous of women—was both these towards the man she loved. She had the strength that shows itself in the power to suffer and endure, but in her disinclination to act alone she was triumphantly feminine.

There is also another point to remember. She

admired her husband's talents and thought him a great statesman, yet deeper than any pride she took in his career was her desire to win the full and undivided love of the man to whom she had solemnly pledged herself at the age of twelve. So, when his power was tottering, she writes from Chanteloup to her confidant Madame du Deffand, who had lately entertained the Duke at one of her famous supper parties, asking her not about his political fortunes, but whether he had spoken about herself, what he had said, and in what tone he had said it. "It seems to me", she adds, "that he has begun to be no longer ashamed of me. It is already a great thing not to wound the *amour-propre* of those by whom one wishes to be loved." If the Duke fell she knew that he would be exiled—such was the invariable practice in French public life—and then they would retire together to Chanteloup, a prospect in any case pleasing but more so in that it would bring to an end the Duke's gallantries with Madame de Brionne, a bold, fascinating beauty who was occupying at this time far more of his attention than were his enemies' intrigues to oust him from office.

Thus the Duchess saw the year 1770 wear away. She confided the latest of her husband's amours to Madame du Deffand only to get scant comfort in return. "Noble, generous, gay and frank" were the adjectives used by the old lady to describe the volatile husband of her youthful *grand'maman*, and she added shrewdly that he was guided by those who consulted only their personal interests. In a sense that was true. Towards the end, however, the factions that rent the Court took a political complexion. Madame du Barry became the head of the reactionary clerical party, and the Duke, who, though he had been responsible for the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, had been disliked by the philosophic Liberals, now received their whole-hearted support. This, coupled with his well-known partiality for the progressive elements in the Parlements, enabled his enemies to complete his downfall. Madame du Barry bore no malice and would

still have preferred to have come to an arrangement with the Duke. She made a final effort to induce him to accept an *entente*, pointing out through her emissary that the King's mistresses had often unmade the King's ministers but that ministers had never unmade mistresses. It was to no purpose ; the Duke remained inexorable. His enemies therefore pushed the dispute between the Parlement of Paris and the Court to an open breach and the King, after much hesitation, signed the letter banishing to Chanteloup the minister who had ruled France for twelve years.

The first shot had been fired in the struggle that, twenty years later, was to bring the whole régime to irremediable ruin.

8

For some years the Duchess had passed the late spring and early summers in the country. There she escaped from the restlessness of Paris and Versailles, from the unwelcome evidence of her sister-in-law's contempt and of her husband's infidelities. She extolled the placid life to Madame du Deffand, who doubted that there could be any happiness away from conversation and the supper-table. The Duchess, echoing Rousseau, declared that the peace, "the sweet peace of heart and spirit" had no need of diversity. "We spend", she wrote, "every day in doing and saying the same things without believing we are repeating ourselves." This bucolic satisfaction, framed in a day that began at ten, was interrupted or enlivened by dinner at three and supper at six, and ended at midnight after a game of backgammon with the Abbé, was perhaps less of a heresy against the sacrosanct claims of *esprit* than it might seem. For the Abbé's wit always sparkled, and never more than at Chanteloup where he had the leisure, in his own words, to concubinate his ideas—an indispensable process if they were ever to crystallize epigrammatically. With the Abbé, with Dr. Gatti, a frequent

visitor and a man who holds an honourable place in the history of medicine for his advocacy of vaccination, with the captain of Swiss Guards—" captain of all the captaincies in the world " as the Duchess described him—the nucleus of the Chanteloup establishment was complete.

And when everything else failed one could always have recourse to the pen, pursuing conversation at the first remove, pointing out the advantages of country life where nothing ever happened to make it necessary to plan for the morrow. " Les projêts ne sont que le désir du mieux être, fondé sur l'inquiétude du present." Why bother then? Did not Montaigne say that he who knew how to take repose had done more than he who had taken empires and cities?

It was, of course, necessary to have courage, but then ennui did not confine itself to the country. No one knew this better than Madame du Deffand, and the Duchess, filled with the satisfaction of her epicurean existence and the delights of a Touraine springtime, gives her own recipe—to eat little for supper, to keep her windows open, to take carriage exercise and to learn to appreciate things and people. Thus pleasure and chagrin took on the neutral tint that was the best basis for happiness. She vouches for this in that, with warm affections and a vivid imagination which both had need of alimentation, she is naturally more prone to boredom than anyone. Yet thanks to her cultivation of the garden of Epicurus she is happy and keeps ennui at a distance.

She had the pleasure, too, of making others happy —sometimes a dangerous pleasure for the others. One day she had gone with the Abbé to Bondésir, a village on her property where stood a noted chapel of Our Lady. Notre Dame de Bondésir, indeed, still worked many miracles, having lately rescued one villager from drowning in the Loire, and having appeared to another as a resplendent figure in white on the roof of his cottage. When the Duchess arrived, the people—our authority is the Abbé—thought she

was another apparition from above. At once she was surrounded by a crowd, amongst which she espied a girl of sixteen whose beauty caught her attention and whom the Duchess caressed with a familiarity only possible in an aristocratic society where everyone knows their place. A young peasant of twenty-two also attracted her, and in conversation with him she learnt his fear of being drawn for the militia and his ambition to be married. As she and the Abbé were talking about them a day or two afterwards, the Duchess suddenly decided that the pair ought to be made man and wife and started off with the Abbé through a violent thunder-storm to arrange for the wedding. "They must be married at once," said the Duchess to the Abbé as they jolted over the rough roads, "these two poor young people will suit each other admirably; they are in love already and they will produce the prettiest children in the world. We will buy them a little plot of land and I will add a little trousseau for the bride."

When they reached Bondésir they saw the bride's mother who agreed to the plan. The prospective bridegroom was nowhere to be found, but they rang the chapel bells and at length he appeared. The Duchess took him aside. "I come here to see you married," she said. "Madame," was the answer, "you do me much honour." "If a pretty girl with a *dot* is found for you, will you take her?" "Madame, I will do whatever you wish." "But haven't you any inclinations yourself?" "Yes, Madame." "And who is that for?" "The daughter of a vine-grower who lives a league from here." "Do you really love her?" "Yes, Madame." "You wouldn't, then, marry another?" "That, Madame, is exactly as you please." "But I do not wish to act contrary to your inclinations, so you shall marry the girl you love." The Duchess still hoped that the girl might have some swain, but though she questioned her in her mother's presence she would admit to none, and it was therefore arranged with the mother that she should look out for a suitable husband and that her daughter should

be married in the following year. Next year, when the girl came to ask for another twelve months, all agreed that a village maid was more difficult to please than any proud beauty.

Such miracles, however, were unusual. The Duchess's interventions in the affairs of the peasantry were mainly directed to seeing that they did not die of hunger. The people of the countryside " danced no minuets ". " Au lieu de danser," says the Abbé, in reply to Madame du Deffand's enquiries about the habits of the villagers, " on meurt de faim ; ce qui n'est pas si gai." And after this casual allusion to the distress that reigned in one of the richest provinces in France, the Abbé returns to the recital of the daily events in the Château.

Word-puzzles were then in vogue, those " logogriphes " which even amused the leisure of a Cicero, and whose posterity live vigorously in our contemporary press, and the Abbé was able to put his erudition at the Duchess's disposal in helping to solve them. After the arrival of the *Mercure* they spend the whole of a windy Sunday afternoon in May at this engrossing pastime. They discover the solution of the first puzzle " bourreau, puisqu'il coupe le cou ". But Dr. Gatti argues for " bureau, puisqu'il coupe le cul ". So they bandy pleasantries, whilst the musicians of the Swiss Guards, an odd combination of three bassoons and three clarinets sent by the Duke out of compliment to his Duchess, treat them to a concert, and they agree in admiring the excellent tone of these instruments which, one imagines, would sound exceedingly harsh to modern ears.

Sometimes guests, bidden or unbidden, dropped in. One day it would be the Archbishop of Tours and his *grand vicaire*. Prelate and archdeacon are despatched before dinner for a row on the lake, where they can admire the " frigate " which is used on ceremonial occasions. After they have dined they are shown the stock of the home farm. A flock of sheep is driven on to the grass outside the drawing-room windows and the boldest of them are enticed inside

by the offer of pieces of bread. Everyone is delighted to learn that a fine ram bears the appropriate name of Cathedral. He is quietly satisfying a necessity of nature when the Duchess's small dog barks at him and Cathedral turns several somersaults on the slippery parquet to the enormous amusement of the company. Parrots blue and red, " the French and Swiss guards of Chanteloup ", lemurs, and a monkey dressed as a grenadier complete with arms and accoutrements, in turn make their appearance. The cows are next in the procession, but happily the difficulties which would have arisen from their progress amidst the Duchess's Louis-Quinze furniture are obviated by the announcement that His Grace's carriage is at the door, and the Duchess and her guests form a cavalcade to escort the Archbishop on his way.

There might be less illustrious visitors. On one occasion a fat *curé* gains entry to the Duchess's toilet and makes her a long harangue in a stentorian voice —it is agreed that he ought to be an Academician. Or the daughter of a neighbouring landowner, who is something of a poet, recites an eclogue of her father's full of compliments to the Duke and Duchess, whereat they all stifle their yawns. " Jamais declamation," declares the Abbé, " plus lente, plus triste, plus manièrée, plus gauche." The country had its charms, but decidedly there was no taste outside of Paris. It was a relief to return to backgammon and " logogriphes ".

9

Such was the existence, interrupted by occasional visits from the Duke himself, which the Duchess had led during the summer months at Chanteloup. When the Duke's banishment made it their permanent home, her previous contentment promised to be transformed into a more positive happiness. It was hateful to think of the odious du Barry's triumph, but since the Duke bore the reverses of fortune with the greatest good humour, she had no particular reason

to grieve. The Duke always considered his position as first minister to the King as derogatory to a scion of the house of Choiseul. French public life had been recruited mainly from the *gens du robe*, and he had never become reconciled to holding office amongst mere lawyers and priests. Besides, the du Barry faction had paid heavily for their victory. Public opinion in Paris was solidly on his side. He and the Duchess left the capital amidst a popular ovation and Chanteloup soon came to be regarded as the headquarters of the Liberal opposition. Amidst these evidences of popular esteem the loss of power seemed a small evil, and with the Duke's zest, gaiety, and *fougue* (which his enemies described as *morgue*) unimpaired, the Duchess was able to assure Madame du Deffand that she had never been further removed from sadness.

Two things only weighed upon her. She had not been accompanied by the Abbé Barthélemy, and her sister-in-law, the harsh imperious Madame de Grammont, would have to live with them at Chanteloup. The Abbé, however, though it cost him much to leave Paris and his beloved coins, was soon on his way to share the exile of the woman he adored. As for the Duchesse de Grammont, Madame de Choiseul told her directly she arrived, and in her husband's presence, that she meant to be mistress of her own house and estates, that she neither asked for anyone's friendship nor promised to give her own. Since, however, they were compelled to live together for her brother's sake, she promised to do what she could to conduce to Madame de Grammont's satisfaction, whatever sentiments she might manifest in return. It cost her much resolution to act thus. How far it succeeded in its purpose is doubtful. The Duchess's own silence about her sister-in-law is matched by the Abbé's garrulousness, and perhaps does not confirm his frequent assertions that Madame de Grammont was the most agreeable of women.

If there were no discords in that quarter, others presented themselves. Comfort, never the strong point of 18th-century civilization, at first was far to seek. They

arrived in the depth of winter to find that the chimneys smoked, blasts blew through the chinks of every window-frame, draughts assailed them from every door. The snow blizzards made it impossible for them to go out, and to stay indoors meant shivering in the cold of the freezing rooms. However, they managed to raise a certain amount of warmth, thanks to sheepskin rugs, to paper pasted round the windows and to vigorous efforts on the part of the sweep.

The Duchess found her time fully occupied. She had almost too much to do. In the morning there was the establishment of the Château to organize, no light task in itself where the domestics ran into scores. Everyone flocked to her levee as they had done at Versailles. The chef, the pastry-cook, the butler waited on her. Christophe, cowman and dairyman, a Chanteloup character, bombarded her with complaints that the colts made the cows slip their calves. Tenants with favours to ask presented petitions to their bountiful châtelaine. There was, too, the business of her own *toilette*. This had now become more important than ever, since she lived in the Duke's eye. "I wish to grow young again," she explains, "and if possible, pretty. Anyhow, I shall try and make the grand-papa believe that I am both the one and the other, and since comparison here is lacking, I shall catch him the more easily." Thus did she settle down to another round in the unending contest of love.

In the beginning of the exile the house-party met at two for dinner, afterwards playing whist—a symptom of the anglomania then prevalent in French society—or backgammon. At six everyone retired until ten, when they reassembled for supper. A reading aloud followed (St. Simon's "Memoirs", of which the Duke had a manuscript copy, were gone through in this way) and then they diverted themselves with "pharaon"—Egyptian only in name—till the early hours. It was, as near as might be, the routine of Paris transferred to the country. Soon they found that two formal meals a day made over-heavy claims

upon sociability and digestion, so the general meeting of the house-party was postponed till six in the evening. At this hour a *dîner-souper* was served, and afterwards they played, read and laughed—whatever they did they laughed—whilst the clock crept round to the early hours. The *dîner-souper* was naturally a great function—" on s'occupe du dîner-souper comme de l'affaire la plus importante de la vie ". For it the men wore the light blue uniform of Chanteloup, and the women dressed as if they had been at Versailles. The table was admirable, as became the ex-minister of a king whose claims to be one of the creators of modern French gastronomy have never been properly admitted, and in Christophe, who stood amongst his cows like Jupiter amongst his goddesses, the Château possessed a master whose cheeses and creams were the best in France.

Wits sparkled amidst such surroundings ; the only languors were those of digestion and liver. Not that the Duchess, whose health at once began to give the Abbé anxiety, ate too much. He complains that she was always thinking of the health of others—never of her own. She had consumptive tendencies and many symptoms. She caught cold easily, she slept badly, she suffered from *maux d'estomac* and other more characteristic feminine complaints. The Abbé was unwearied in detailing these to Madame du Deffand with medical frankness ; but then it was a time when everyone loved to talk of their ailments, and it is clear that although the Duchess was thought to be something of a prude, there was very little of the working of her interior economy with which the Abbé was unfamiliar. The enlightened Dr. Gatti recommended fresh air and exercise ; the whimsical Abbé pointed out that all the ladies at Chanteloup lived an active life and were able to make five or six whole turns of the salon on foot. But this was not thought sufficient, and so on fine days they rode a-hunting.

In all rôles the Duchess excited the Abbé's admiration, in that of Diana not less than the others. She and the Duke hunted in the grand manner, which did

not resemble that of the Shires. M. de Perceval, the Master of the Hunt, headed the cavalcade, both his pink taffeta coat and the caracoling of his horse exciting general admiration. His deputy, the Lieutenant des Chasses, followed him, in voice and figure a comic foil to his captain. The first huntsman, his horn wound round his neck, reminded them of Squire Western. Three or four whips, five or six game-keepers, and seven or eight hounds were next in the procession, after which came the field, headed by the Duke and Duchess. She showed a " fearful courage ", cantering down the forest glades. As for Dr. Gatti, he held on with both hands to the pummel of his saddle and explained that his hunched seat was due to sciatica. The Abbé stood in no need of any explanations since he rode a pony so small that his long legs almost touched the ground.

They hunted anything which crossed their track. One day they killed a wolf in the ordered style that used to give generals their victories, that is to say, in the Abbé's words, " they heard the hubbub, rode towards the spot whence it came, found the enemy already extended full length on the sward, were frightened, and then retired in good order ". Neither huntsmen, hounds, nor the observation of the members of the hunt were to be relied on. Blank days were the rule, in spite of the optimism that mistook hares for stags, and bores for boars. This, at least, was the Abbé's joke, after they had been waiting an hour in the summer rain, whilst they unsuccessfully drew a thicket wherein the bell-ringer of Amboise, who by some strange chance happened to be taking his diversion in the forest, declared that he had seen the tusker disappear. They returned to the Château having expended much *esprit*, and the Duchess could then amuse herself with the " Encyclopédie " articles Voltaire had just sent her, and be pleased with remarking that " âne " was followed by " ange ".

There was no close season for this Alice-in-Wonderland sport. Fine weather in February brought out

the whole household, masters on horseback, mistresses in carriages, and valets on foot. On one such occasion the Duke killed the half of a hare, M. de Perceval accounting for the other half; on another "the quarter of a snipe which was removed by the other three-quarters". Desiring better sport, and the house-party having decided that a captive stag was suffering from boredom—what could be more depressing than the appearance of ennui even in a dumb animal? whilst anyhow according to Grotius and Hobbes every living thing had the right to liberty—they had the animal carried on the backs of four men to the woods, where they let him go. The stag went on—and they went back, the field including a Duke, a Cardinal, an Archbishop, and three Chevaliers of St. Louis. It was, as the Abbé observed, a brave sight, and carried through in the most admirable order. Though they were not bloodthirsty, they felt, all the same, that the pleasures of the chase must be seasoned by an occasional kill, and after two months during which they saw nothing and the only bag consisted of a wild cat, shot by one of the keepers, the Duke reorganized his hunting establishment by importing new huntsmen from Paris. The success of this reform, however, was dubious. Then, kite-flying suddenly becoming the fashion, everyone agreed that the *cerf-volant*, if not more graceful, was certainly more visible than the *cerf*.

With the Duke more amiable than ever, the Duchess, if gaiety were foreign to her temperament, could not but be content. The intrigues of Paris and the Court, in which they were kept well posted, interested her far less than her silly sheep that had such a precarious hold upon life. Happily Cathedral had been spared to impress Madame du Deffand, when she paid them her long-promised visit. Whilst she thus played the *bergerette*, the Duke occupied himself with weaving, his memoirs, and the flute.

Music was a resource. Round four o'clock in the afternoon, the Duke, when more active pursuits did not call him, would go quietly to his wife's boudoir

where she pursued the endless business of the *toilette*. She would then seat herself at her English pianoforte —" the worst instrument in the world and always out of tune "—and play duets with the Duke or the latest harpsichord pieces from Paris where Schobert was then the rage. She did so *sans succès et sans gloire*, but she had ambitions and practised diligently. The Duke was less persevering, though he managed to get through the *obbligato* part which Madame du Deffand had had written for her favourite air. This the Duchess sang, but only in the strictest privacy.

To raise the standard of performance, Balbâtre was brought from Paris. He delighted everyone with his playing on the harpsichord, and his *pianoforte organisé* —a combination of piano and organ—excited general admiration. Everyone was ravished by the way he played a suite of " Noëls ", naturally of his own composition. The Duchess took lessons from him assiduously, and the Abbé, who was accorded the high privilege of being present on these occasions, records how at the twenty-fifth Madame de Choiseul only tapped her foot with impatience three times and broke down four or five. She practised two pieces all day, in order to play them to the Duke " without trembling ". What pieces they were we know not, most probably they were Balbâtre's own ; but we do know, on the Abbé's authority, that in the end she succeeded in playing them to perfection. Balbâtre, however, was too great a master to remain permanently at the Château—France was not Austria and Choiseul was not Esterhazy—and the Duchess, before his coming, had worked with the young musician attached to the household, who was appropriately named Phonège. Under his tuition the Duchess played for two hours every morning, and often for longer in the afternoon. Even the difficult art of music might have given up its secrets to such assiduous courting had not Phonège, to the Duchess's great grief, suddenly died of a putrid fever.

His place was taken by his brother Louis, a fascinating little creature in whom were united the grace

of childhood, the sensibility of adolescence, the intelligence and laboriousness of maturity. Here was an opportunity for her to love, though she reflected that in giving him her heart she had probably only found another occasion for unhappiness, a reflection countered by her philosophy and the passivity induced by a country life, which counselled her not to look beyond the day. Like the rest of those who surrounded her he soon became the Duchess's slave and felt for his mistress all the passionate ardour of his twelve years. In a word, he loved the Duchess " to the point of folly ", and she, on her side, did the same. Louis, as the Abbé observed, was a thousand times better than a dog, a cat, or even a lover—though here he qualifies his opinion with a " perhaps ". Day by day his caresses grew more pressing, until the Duchess, whose heart was always the servant of her head, realized that, like all foolishness, the time had come when it must stop. So one morning, as this Cherubino was about to throw his arms round his adored lady's neck, she forbade his embraces. Poor Louis obeyed—and suffered. He refused to smile, or to eat, and went about like the ghost of his former jolly little self. The Duchess's heartstrings were wrung, and in the afternoon, when she found him at her harpsichord, sighing like the traditional lover, she was touched and called him her " bel enfant ". This was too much for Louis, who burst into uncontrollable tears, amidst his sobs reproaching his mistress for using such a term of endearment when she loved him no more and refused to allow him to love her. Madame de Choiseul sent for Louis's sister in the hopes that she might be able to comfort him. Meanwhile, as she herself reasoned with him, the tears flowed more quietly. He listened with patient submission, only exclaiming from time to time : " How can I prove that I love you ? " making as if to kiss the Duchess's hand but repressing the inclination before it had been translated wholly into gesture. To hide her own tears, the Duchess fled, and told the story to the Duke who joined his tears to

hers. " After that," she says to Madame du Deffand, " laugh if you can." " L'expression vraie de la nature est si rare qu'il est impossible de résister à l'impression qu'elle fait, peut-être autant de surprise que par le fond même de choses ; mes yeux sont encore gros, rouges. Les larmes m'offusquent encore en vous faisant ce récit. Mon cœur est serré. Je ne sais comment je pouvrai cacher tout celà dans le salon. Cet enfant m'a amolli le cœur."

It was not then the fashion to pamper the maternal instinct, which, after all is only a form of egoism, and this is one of the rare occasions when the Duchess mourned her childlessness. Louis was allowed to spend another three months at Chanteloup and then, much to her chagrin, the Duchess sent him to Paris. But the four and a half years' exile was then near its end, and with them the Duchess's recorded adventures in the art that the poetic imagination has called the moody food of love.

Music and literature were not the only arts cultivated at Chanteloup. Theatricals occupied the whole of one July and all agreed that the Duchess acted as if she had been on the stage for twenty years. Ingénue rôles, in which she looked twelve, suited her best ; she made a particular hit as Mariane in " Tartuffe ". In a society where everyone took trouble to talk well, the Duchess had always excelled, and the beauty of her diction stood her in good stead for these excursions into comedy. They went at it very seriously, rehearsing twice a day and holding three performances a week. These began at six in the evening, and lasted till nine, when audience and players supped together. Afterwards, if the weather held fine, they went on the lake, where the frigate had been illuminated for the occasion, or they danced alfresco to the music of the Chanteloup orchestra. As the night wore on the more energetic, or more romantic, members of the house-party went down to the Loire and breakfasted on its banks at sunrise. The Duchess's health forbade such pleasures, but the Duke, always indefatigable, kept pace with the youngest and most ardent.

10

During these years Chanteloup, the centre of the unofficial opposition to the du Barry régime, was always besieged by visitors. Since the Duke's fall from power had made him the cynosure of all eyes, the main road through Orleans had become the most frequented in France. A visit to Chanteloup was the smart thing to do. The Duchess, always tender for her husband's reputation, found this homage agreeable enough in so far as it rehabilitated him, but for herself the crowds of visitors were hardly less overwhelming than those of Versailles and Fontainebleau had been. "I have twenty guests," she writes on one occasion, "of whom I am thoroughly tired." Sometimes they were so numerous that she could not name them all. One, who absented himself from the dinner table for several weeks, was completely forgotten. At Mass on Sundays there might be a hundred people present. Such an establishment required an army of servants—fifty at one moment were down with fever. She could not escape. Even her own room resounded to the constant hum of conversation. "Running in my head", she tells Madame du Deffand, "is a comic opera which they are singing to my harpsichord whilst I am writing here in my closet; 'tis nearly nine in the evening, and since two my room has been occupied without intermission. It is the same thing day after day and I cannot escape because it is a passage room open on all sides. Obsessed from morning till evening I know not where to go to be able to attend to my own affairs, and I feel ready to cry." This lament was penned during one of the Abbé's rare visits to Paris, and doubtless his absence heightened her depression. Her correspondent could sympathize with her desire for quiet, since there were noises to which one never grew accustomed, and the cocks and donkeys of the farmyard were less intolerable than the coxcombs and asses of society.

Did she expect too much from others? Was she, like Teresa, consumed with a passion for right living

which paid too little regard to the infirmities of human nature? Even the Abbé sometimes inclined to this opinion, as, too, the cynical *petite fille*, who from her *tonneau* in St. Joseph's observed that with people as with books, there was always much to desire and more to reject. Yet the Duchess did not wish to be critical. The only pleasure in this world—she repeats it over and over again—was to love and to be loved; if she could be blessed as far as this, she desired no more. Now, as she neared the forties, she began to see life as a whole and to realize that old age stands at the door once love and confidence has departed. It was, in other words, all the difference between the heart and the head; with acquaintances one could only think, one could not feel—with friends alone could one share the bittersweet of tears. Philosophy offered its consolation, but what a pity it wore so sober a livery! Reading, too, often helped to make one bear with ignorance. Not that she had the opportunity to read a great deal amidst the crowd of aristocratic wits and great ladies who thronged Chanteloup, but she managed at one time to draw comfort from Sully's "Memoirs", which helped her to appreciate her husband's virtues, so much did he resemble that great man.

Thus her mind revolved in a circle of which the Duke remained the centre, though she disguised it well enough, even from herself. The Comtesse de Brionne, the last and not the least fascinating in the line of the Duke's loves, went to stay at Chanteloup. The ever-indulgent Abbé liked her at once for the attention she showed the Duchess, who, as soon as she came to know her, admired the *douceur*, the *facilité*, the *esprit* and the *fond* which made the Countess one of the most attractive women of her day. The Duchess, in fact, quite lost her heart to the brilliant creature, and the Duke could enjoy the unusual spectacle of seeing his wife and mistress as inseparable companions. Surely that was a generous gesture on her part? Yet, when Madame du Deffand, from whom she hid nothing, said that she felt sure the *grand'papa* preferred the

Duchess to all, and that his only real love was for her, Madame de Choiseul, though her vanity might be flattered, knew well enough that her efforts had been in vain and that her own passion differed in kind, rather than degree, from the Duke's genuine but light-hearted affection.

And as her mind revolved in this circle of frustration and disillusion, Life took on ever more sombre colours. The condition of apathy to which she was generally reduced seemed the most desirable and reasonable state. What could she talk, or write about ? Misfortunes were only in place in novels ; none but fools talked of their affairs, and only children had the right to speak of their pleasures. As one's literary taste grew sharp with age, reading became ever a more dubious resource. " Heureux les pauvres de goût, parce qu'il faut peu de chose pour les contenter." It was the Abbé's witticism, but she could answer for its truth. Even the pleasures of the table, to which the Duchess admits she was not insensible, lost their savour in the certainty that indigestion would follow. Nothing, absolutely nothing really mattered except to know and to feel love, and in the absence of this knowledge—and in the presence of indigestion — she got up in the morning tired and went to bed bored. The business of living disintegrated itself into a sequence of discontented minutes which had to be occupied. " I await with impatience ", she wrote, " all the epochs of my day, and I fill them with disgust. Is not this ", she adds, " de bel et bon ennui " ? Even so did Teresa wrestle with the arch-enemy, though in her case she called it spiritual dryness.

Into this dull affair of living, duller care insinuated itself little by little. None but fools talked of their affairs ; the Duke had a patrician contempt for creditors, and the Duchess, in the taste for building which she indulged at Chanteloup, had found one of the easiest means of spending known to aristocrats of all ages except the present. Yet the Duchess had more respect for money than the Duke—her grandfather

had been a *petit bourgeois*—and very soon after the beginning of the Chanteloup exile, when expenditure had mounted alarmingly, she took the advice of friends and of her husband and applied for a *séparation de biens*, which put her own fortune beyond the reach of the Duke's creditors. For the expenses of the life at Chanteloup made it necessary to borrow on a heroic scale. Bankers from Paris waited upon the Duke to satisfy his more urgent needs, the synchronization of their visits affording material for the Abbé's wit. The Duchess's jewels were early victims of the constant deficit in their budget, which was made more serious by the Duke being forced to resign his post, originally granted for life, as Colonel-General of the Swiss, worth altogether about £5,000 a year. But the Duke, who believed that money was intended to be spent and who had included a Pope amongst his pensioners, thought little enough of liabilities to mere bankers, and to the end of his life his affairs continued to grow more and more involved and his creditors' toils to tighten round him.

The construction of the famous Pagoda in the gardens of Chanteloup, intended as a perpetual memorial of the Duke's gratitude to those who had rallied round him in his exile, added to his embarrassments. There were not wanting critics who laughed at this last folly of the Duke's, though the visitor to Chanteloup to-day, who finds that this charming example of the *goût chinois* of the time is the only part of the Château which has escaped destruction, will give the verdict of posterity in the Duke's favour. One can still read on its walls the names of all who visited the Château in the days when Chanteloup was the most celebrated spot in France. The Duchess, who regarded the Pagoda as another proof of her husband's magnanimity, protested that her own name should not have the place of honour beside that of her sister-in-law. The Duchesse de Grammont had behaved nobly in sharing her brother's disgrace; for herself her duty as a wife had been too plain to be considered deserving of compliment. But the Duke would not

have it so, and the names of these two women who did not love each other appear side by side on the walls of this Tower of Friendship and Gratitude. It cost the Duke £7,000 which he did not possess. The Duchess, however, protested vehemently that it was no extravagance. Had the Pagoda, she said, been built merely to embellish the gardens it might have rightly been called a monument of folly; as a monument of friendship it attested the Duke's good sense. It had hardly begun to raise its tapering form a hundred and twenty feet into the air when the Duchess, more bitten than ever with the taste for building, spent the days of a hot July in drawing up plans for a château not less splendid than Chanteloup, but very much more comfortable.

Well might Madame du Deffand, with such an example before her of the Duchess's buoyant faith in the future, refuse to believe that the *grand'maman* ever really suffered from that ennui from which she herself never escaped. "On ne jouit point de la vie", said the old disillusioned woman, "elle se dissipe. Il n'y a que le sentiment satisfait qui nous avise de notre existence et nous la rend agréable. Toute le reste est brouillard ou fumée." And she thought well to contrast her own loneliness with the Duchess's reasons for contentment. "La fortune a pris soin de votre bonheur", she tells her, "mais votre raison n'en a pas moins tout l'honneur." The *grand-papa* was the ideal husband, he had been made for her, since to fill her heart she must have had someone "susceptible of all the passions", a being of whose affections she now enjoyed the principal share, affections which she would eventually have the glory and pleasure of monopolizing.

This comfortable philosophy might have been more convincing to the Duchess had not the Comtesse de Brionne continued to exact a considerable share of those very affections which it seemed unlikely that she herself would ever wholly command. To do her justice, Madame du Deffand admitted at other times that life might be difficult even for one so wise and

good as the *grand'maman*. Its endless vicissitudes and change always made it formidable, and when outward things remained the same we were liable to suffer sudden transformations in ourselves which were equally upsetting. Altogether it was a bad business—only a grand passion had the power to fix our ideas. "On ferait des livres sur ce sujet, mais tout ce qu'on dit, tout ce qu'on pense ne peut rien sur ce que nous sentons." Then she returns once again to the contemplation of the Duchess's felicity.

II

A GRAND passion might act as a lodestar amidst vicissitude and change—felicity it could not give. The Duchess had never been able to achieve a proper complex of mind and heart. She could not direct thought and feeling into the same channel. She loved ideally, but she also loved passionately, and the Duke was unable to satisfy such ardour and such idealism. Possibly the task would have been beyond any man. In the calm waters of friendship she was blessed with that of the Abbé Barthélemy, but beyond friendship there lay little except unrealized hopes. She could never rectify her initial mistake of having fallen in love with too attractive a man. Neither could she rise through faith to those uplands of religion where blow the flowers of such a love as inspired Teresa of Avila. Though "her century was unworthy of her" she remained its child; no suffering could shake the poise of her rational mind and give her any clue to that fourth dimensional, supernatural state wherein the mystics find themselves at home. Her courage had no resources outside itself to draw upon when, in the third volume of her life, sufferings—to the mystic the mark of divine favour—added burden on burden to the weight the Duchess already had to bear.

"Vicissitude and change"—when Madame du Deffand wrote the words no woman seemed further removed from the accidents of life than the Duchesse

de Choiseul, yet no woman was to experience more fully the instability of mundane things. At first, on the return to Paris at Christmastide of 1774, it seemed as if the old threads were to be resumed. Received in triumph, fêted wherever they went, the Duke and Duchess had never been so prominent in the social world of Paris. Madame du Deffand, now giving the supper party which had been planned four years before but had never taken place owing to the Duke's exile, procured two " Noëls " from Voltaire to welcome her guests. The greatest man of letters in Europe had acceded to the demand of his old friend and sent her some couplets which would go with the Suite that Balbâtre had arranged to play on his pianoforte. Unhappily there had been a breach between Ferney and Chanteloup owing to Voltaire's equivocation with Maupeou, the Duke's sworn enemy, and the result was only too apparent in the verses he sent her. These brought in all the machinery of the " Noël "—Bethlehem, the manger, the ox and the ass—but coupled with the fortunes of the Choiseuls in such a wilfully clumsy manner that Madame du Deffand was furious. Voltaire received his couplets back, accompanied by the observation that the ox, the ass and the Holy Family were not in question. She wanted something about the exile and the return, the public joy, her own delight. " I see that I have done wrong, that I have made an indiscreet request, that I have been too familiar with the great Voltaire. Try again," she wrote, " but for Heaven's sake remember that the stable and the Holy Family have nothing to do with my supper party. Chanteloup must not recall Bethlehem." Voltaire did as he was told. Women were despots and he bowed his head to the universal yoke, only they should at least explain what they wanted. He sent a couple of " Noëls " which avoided all biblical allusions. If not the best in the world, he said, they were at least good enough for a pianoforte which, compared with a harpsichord, was a boiler-maker's instrument.

On pleurait sans cesse
Quand femme et sœur partit ;
Plus de chants, plus de danse,
Et surtout plus d'esprit.

So ran one stanza. The Duchess would not have been softened towards the great man by the fact that the only reference to her in his " Noël " included Madame de Grammont. The time had gone by when she could aver that she was always pleased with Voltaire so long as he remained reasonable. The animadversion of men of letters had always seemed to her " the most dangerous of pests ". She was not inclined to change her mind now. But though she had struck Voltaire's name from the list of her friends—in any case, she maintained, authors were best known through their writings—he continued to be the writer she read and re-read with the greatest pleasure. Montesquieu might be more profound, more original. That Voltaire said nothing new seemed to her a merit. So long as he developed her own thoughts and repeated better than anyone else what others had already told her, she was content. She had no need to learn more than all the world knew, and no other author would equal him in telling her so much as that.

So they resumed the threads of the old life, the old life with the same people and the same ideas. The old faces, a little more wrinkled, the Prince and Princesse de Beauveu, the Duc de Gontaut, Boyer de Fonscolombe who had been secretary to the Embassy in Rome, the Abbé, of course, who suffered more from uric acid every year, even the Maréchale de Mirepoix, restored again to the select circle since Madame du Barry's brief reign was at an end, and all those who had been at Chanteloup during the exile—two hundred and ten faithful friends—again met in endless permutations for the *dîner* and *souper*, the luncheon and dinner of a later day. They called on each other in the mornings and again in the afternoons. They talked, they ate, they played cards—and they laughed. Paris in the winter and Chanteloup in summer saw

this society engaged in the always arduous task of living according to the ritual of *bon goût.*

Yet, if people were the same, things somehow were different. Change was making its insidious way into the privileged domain of the old order. The Duchess, surveying the scene around her, saw and noted the beginnings of the romantic movement in which energy and enthusiasm were taking the place of truth and good taste. In its origins she attributed it to the influence of music which Gluck had transformed into an instrument for the expression of personal emotion. From its "convulsions" which she deplored, many other convulsions were to follow which she could not be expected to foresee. So this acute observer writes to Madame du Deffand that the great men of the past had left no successors—a lament of the year 1779, when Napoleon Bonaparte was a boy of ten.

Economics played its part in the transformation. The aristocracy had begun to find it necessary to think about money, always a sign that the world is out of joint for those who have thus to retrench. The Duke's finances had never been sound; under the double expense of keeping open house in Paris and at Chanteloup his situation now became critical. The bankers grew less accommodating, the creditors more impatient. To do him justice he showed little concern, though his friends worked hard to restore him to power where there would have been some chance that his expenditure of £40,000 a year might have been balanced by the prizes of office. Strings were pulled by many, including the Comte d'Artois and the Comtesse de Brionne, an intimate of Marie Antoinette. But he who had been the creature of a king's mistress was not destined to be the creature of his successor's queen, in spite of the efforts of Marie Antoinette, as solicitous to help the Duke as ever Madame de Pompadour had been. Louis XVI remained cool towards the ex-minister. He showed royal generosity in lending him four million francs, which for the moment staved off

disaster, but he refused to employ the man whom he described contemptuously as a " mangeur ".

Not that the Duc de Choiseul cared. With insatiable zest and despite his sixty years he pursued pleasure more indefatigably than ever, inspired by the conscious pride that, amongst a younger generation that had lost grip of the elements of good breeding, he belonged to a society whose polite manners had been learnt at Versailles and Fontainebleau in the brilliant heyday of the Pompadour's reign. Then all the arts had served the greatest art of all—that of fine living. If, in the increasing poverty of the upper classes, many found it necessary to think of money, he at least would not bow the knee to any sordid Mammon. And as a gesture to emphasize that an aristocracy has its own way of interpreting the brotherhood and equality of man, he gave a ball to the four hundred valets and ladies' maids who had accompanied their masters and mistresses to Chanteloup. These danced and feasted in the salons of his great hotel which occupied the site behind that where the Opera now stands, and for one night the barrier of class was removed.

Many thought—the Duchess amongst them—that the Duke alone could save the state. Five nights a week his partisans, and those who liked to lounge or climb in the salons of the great, flocked to the receptions where the Duke and Duchess received in the long gallery of their house. All Paris used to be there. Literature and politics were discussed, the King's ministers pilloried, and the watchwords of coming Revolution bandied with the detachment that philosophy gives ; for the more frivolous there were games, whist, piquet and noisy *tric-trac*, still the delight of middle-aged patrons of French provincial cafés ; some to escape the hubbub retired to the library and read. At a quarter to ten Lesueur, the butler, threw his eye over the company and estimated the number of guests for supper—there might be forty, there might be sixty —which was thereupon served. Only on Fridays and Saturdays were they not at home, though even then

their house and table were always open for the faithful two hundred and ten of Chanteloup. At the end of the seventeen-seventies, the Duke and Duchess were unquestionably the leaders of French society and his popularity had never been so great, his position more eminent.

At Chanteloup itself in spring and summer the crowds were not less insistent. The Abbé complained that one could not hear oneself speak in the salons, whilst the rattle of tongues and plates at supper made general conversation impossible. He saw the Duchess —that was all. Her health was growing worse, he had given up trying to " understand her stomach " or to talk with her alone. All he knew was that she speared a pear on her fork with as sure an eye as ever. There supervened a serious illness ; at one moment her life was despaired of and the inconsolable Duke remained night and day at her bedside. She recovered, to find her physical strength still further weakened and the seeds sown of the invalidism which was to mark the last twenty years of her life.

But there were quiet intervals when the Duchess, whose correspondence with the *petite fille* had sadly dwindled, could still philosophize, pen in hand. " You ask me how I pass the time all alone. Alas ! I haven't an idea. I only know that it passes, that the evening follows close on the morning, that this begins for me at one o'clock and that I haven't even time to play the harpsichord. Not that I swim in that abundance of ideas of which you accuse me. Nor that I know well how to occupy my time ; it is simply that I know how to waste it, and be it said without self-praise, this is perhaps the first of all the sciences. In a word, without knowing how or why, I am happy, very happy, as happy as one can be separated from one's friends, for the delights of friendship, I avow, are the true blessedness. Still one cannot always be in the heavens ; on the other hand things that crawl on earth, though exposed to suffering, are not always its prey. I crawl like anyone else, and I get along too like any other. In the matter of happiness, the best and surest way is to

take it as it comes; one should not search for the why and the how, one should only look for the causes of evil and for the means of removing the thorn that wounds us. When one really wants to succeed it is rare not to be able to do so. I say this because I believe it, perhaps because I know it. Far from inculpating humanity, let us bless nature which allows time to heal the heart's wounds. Courage and wisdom triumph over other ills. Most owe their existence only to weakness or folly, and it is right that we should carry the chains that we have forged for ourselves. Believe me, my dear *petite fille*, it is not so difficult to be happy—a thought at least consoling if it is not new. I haven't an idea what has led me to these cold moralities. Forgive me for them—I am alone, and what should one do in one's lair, says La Fontaine, if not dream? That is my excuse."

12

The gentle follower of Epicurus was not destined to write much more in this vein; the trials through which she was soon to pass made it impossible to pretend that she was happy. Yet the 'eighties opened with promise. Necker, wrestling with the national finances, had secretly come to support the Duke's political fortunes and it looked as if he might again return to power. The fall of that financial minister filled the Duchess with all the more chagrin in that it again made the Duke's return to power seem remote. "C'en est donc fait, monsieur, vous nous abandonnez; vous emportez votre gloire, vous nous laissez vos regrets," thus she prefaced an invitation to Necker to stay at Chanteloup, now, as much as ever during the exile, the centre of the opposition. But even the death of Maurepas, another bitter enemy of the Duke, brought office no nearer and the Duke, during the intervals of his life of industrious pleasure, found additional distraction in consulting Mesmer and dabbling in spiritualism.

Ruin stared him in the face; he returned the stare

with aristocratic insolence. Still, the catastrophe could not be avoided by such a gesture, and the loss of their great town house marked the first stage in the financial crash. It came as no particular trial to the Duchess, who had never loved the life of Paris and whose heart was in Touraine. When this sacrifice failed to satisfy creditors and her beloved Chanteloup began to tremble on the abyss of the Duke's liabilities, she had more need to marshal the resources of her philosophy and her courage. But just when negotiations had been entered upon with the Duc de Penthièvre, who had a taste for collecting great country houses—Rambouillet having been one of his properties—and was now seeking to add Chanteloup to the list, the Duke suddenly fell ill with pleurisy, in May, 1785. From the start his condition was serious. Following the strange fashion of the time friends and intimates flocked to the comparatively modest house in the Rue Grange Batelière, whither the Duke and Duchess had moved, and took up their quarters in rooms and anterooms. Thirty persons slept in the house, amongst them ten great ladies including the Comtesse de Brionne. Meals were set for eighty covers. The whole quarter resounded to the rumble of wheels and the cries of coachmen and footmen. Outside the house the carriages formed a long queue. And in all this confusion due regard had to be paid to rank, the more exalted being admitted to rooms nearer the sick chamber. Four secretaries were kept busy issuing bulletins and answering enquiries. No royal personage, indeed, could have made a more imposing exit from the stage of life.

In the sick-room the Duchess found her efforts to nurse her husband—and the case was one purely of nursing—hampered rather than aided by the advice of eleven doctors. Faced by such a cumbrous coalition of the Faculty Death found the Duke an easy, but a gallant, victim, for he handled that grim Personage with the same nonchalant energy which he had shown to Popes and Kings. He struggled to evade the scythe; when common sense told him it could not be, he called

for two lawyers and dictated his will as coolly as if it had been a mere State document. He explained how he wished to be buried; he left legacies to over fifty dependants—legacies that his estate proved unable to meet; he bequeathed his diamond of the Toison d'Or to the Comtesse de Brionne—the only lady of all his loves to be mentioned in his will—and made his sister his heir and residuary legatee. It was all splendid and orderly and generous, and for the moment people forgot, even if they knew, that his generosity was that of a ruined man. And at the last he did not creep away in the small hours of the morning as lesser spirits do, but died in the full glare of a Sunday, the lightest hour of the week. But not before he had taken leave of his Duchess and received from her the promise—the second death-bed promise of her life—that she would do all she could to pay his debts.

All France uncovered its head: everyone felt an epoch had ended. Almost the only person in France to be unmoved was the inept Louis XVI. And the splendour of the Duc de Choiseul's end was equalled by the action of the widow, "whose state of grief inspired horror". For as soon as possible after her husband's body had started on its funerary progress to Amboise, she retired to the Convent of les Recolettes in the Rue du Bac, accompanied only by a single servant and by the Duke's favourite dog. There she planned to spend the rest of her days, devoting all her private fortune to the satisfaction of her husband's creditors.

At first it seemed as if those days would not be long. She was only fifty-two, but continued ill-health and an operation she had recently undergone had prematurely aged her. Now, when the Abbé paid his daily visit, he found her racked with pain which often made her cry aloud. Now, too, since the Duke had at last been idealized through death and she could draw the image of his perfections undimmed by any of the spots which she had been unable to eliminate in the living subject, her sensibility grew proportionately more exquisite. At the least allusion to him she

burst into tears; anything that reminded her of the felicity which she thought had once been hers made her weep. It was a melancholy spectacle redeemed only by the Duchess's courage—" malgré tant de causes de destruction son courage ne s'affaiblit point, et les médecins se flattent de la conserver ".

Thus wrote the Abbé, reflecting that he was now repaying with interest the leisurely life of Chanteloup. Yet he would not have changed his lot, although he had never really been reconciled to the sacrifice of his own pursuits and career that Chanteloup had entailed. The Abbé loved Madame de Choiseul; he also loved his coins and had a wistful regard for the reputation he might have won in scholarship and letters. Long before, he had once unburdened himself to Madame du Deffand on the sacrifice that his devotion entailed; he had not been oblivious, too, that the irony which runs through human relationships had caused the Duchess to accept that devotion in the same matter of course way that the Duke treated that of his wife, the usual fate of the party which has the greater love. Not that he had ever regretted his choice. " Je ne suis pas à me plaindre. Je connais si bien le prix de ce que je possède, que je donnerais ma vie pour ne pas le perdre." He was not likely to change his mind now that in his seventieth year he could look back on the best part of a lifetime given to the service of his Lady of Perfection.

Indeed, the Abbé had grown more indispensable than ever to the Duchess. He helped her assiduously in the baffling task of straightening out the late Duke's affairs, in which they were both aided by the Archbishop of Tours, who found the business of settling the sale of Chanteloup as exacting as that of ruling his diocese. Little by little the mass of debts dwindled. The King received back his four million francs—the price that Chanteloup realized. And the Duchess would probably have succeeded in her heroic task had not the Revolution intervened with its still more heroic liquidation of old liabilities.

The Duchess's retirement to the cloister was a real retirement. No fierce light beat upon her cell-like apartments, as it did upon Teresa of Avila; religion offered no inspiration that might give zest and excitement to the routine of her days. She was cheered by the occasional visits of old friends, chief amongst these being the Duc de Gontaut, through whose marriage with her sister she had originally met her husband. Neither were all literary diversions denied her. For the Abbé, with more time now on his hands, devoted himself to the work which he had planned years before, the "Voyage d'Anacharsis" and the Duchess had the solace of helping and advising him in the composition of a book which they had talked of together for thirty years. The modern reader, as he yawns over its studied pages, wonders at the metamorphosis which could transform such a delicious letter-writer into so dull and stilted an author. The most human touch is the passage where the Abbé pays one more tribute to the incomparable woman in whom his own life was bound up. "I consecrate to the wife of Arsame the homage which truth ever gives to virtue; to talk of her wit one should have as much as she; to speak of her heart, her wit would not suffice—one would have to have her soul. Phédime discovers at a glance the different relations of an object, she expresses them in a word. She seems sometimes to remember what she has never learnt. . . . She could without a blush contemplate the sequence of thoughts and feelings which have occupied her throughout her life. Her conduct proves that the virtues in their union make only one; she has proved too that such virtue is the surest means of acquiring general esteem without exciting envy. To the intrepid courage that energy of character gives she joins an active and boundless kindness. . . . Her one ambition is to please her husband."

To the delight of Madame de Choiseul the book had an immense success. It was the literary sensation of 1789, for its Hellenic *décor* matched the first white glow of the coming Revolution, whilst its style flattered

the nice literary taste of a generation accustomed to silks and fine array. The Gods punish us by granting our prayers. The Abbé, now that he had won a reputation, looked back regretfully on his happy obscurity. But he could not stay the current of fame which carried him from supper-table to supper-table until it landed him safely at length in one of the chairs of the Forty. At his official reception the poor man, who belonged heart and soul to the old régime, whose fastidious wit had to be seasoned with the laughter of great ladies, so far yielded to the fashion of the moment as to salute the dawn of the new era. Did Madame de Choiseul approve of this gesture towards the unknown future? Was she another victim of the madness which caused the privileged class to offer its neck to the knife? The Dowager in her retirement has left us little record of her views, though seeing that she was an admirer of Necker, who proved quite incompetent to ride the whirlwind, it is probable that she, like the rest, held the liberal opinions which were to receive such short shrift from the Paris mob. It is well, however, to know that the reply of the Chevalier de Boufflers to the newly elected Academician contained a worthy reference to Madame de Choiseul: "C'est vous qui l'on retrouve encore mieux que les Grecs dans cet hommage pur qu'à chaque instant vous plaisez à rendre à l'amitié. Nulle part on ne reconnait mieux sa divine inspiration, ses doux accents, son influence pénétrante; c'est l'amitié qui, de sa main fidèle, traça l'image de Phédime avec la delicatesse, avec la pureté de l'âme de Phédime elle même."

13

THAT delicacy, that purity was now to pass unsullied through the mire of the Revolution. As the sky darkened and the emigration of 1790 began, she decided to remain in Paris, for her misery placed her beyond fear. She came to this decision the easier since the Abbé, too, had decided to stay, rightly as she thought,

since he was " sheltered by the general esteem ". It was another proof of her high courage. She might have gone and avoided the dangers that every day grew nearer, but in that case the business of paying her husband's debts would have been interrupted and the one object in her life removed. So she remained to watch the Society of which she had been the ornament crumble to dust, to see her friends and relations fall victims to the guillotine. Already in December, 1789, when the Paris mob had gained control, she wrote to Boyer de Fonscolombe, " Nous avons vu un autre temps, mon pauvre M. Boyer ; je n'avais qu'un bonheur de plus mais il les renfermait tous, et si d'ailleurs j'avais d'autres malheurs que je n'ai plus et qui n'étaient personnels, du moins voyais-je tout heureux autour de moi. Mon âme en était reposée et refraichée ; aujourd'hui je ne vois que souffrance et crainte ; je ne sais ce que je deviens moi même, je souffre dans les autres." The widow's grief of Madame de Choiseul —Duchesse no longer but plain Citoyenne—finds expression here with the same sincerity and delicacy as her own past griefs as a wife, which to one so intimate as Boyer de Fonscolombe it would have been dishonest to have ignored. The only way to escape from the horrors of the time was through philosophy ; now, as always, it shed its soft light over her path. The present was intolerable, but then we only live in the past. " The fugitive present is nothing to us ; like mercury, it is impossible to make it stay still. The future maybe will not exist at all, although it is upon its contingencies that we build. In effect we only live in the past ; memory makes it the depository of all our ideas." And unlike many philosophers she had enough sense of humour to admit that she had always been a *raisonneuse*—a *raisonneuse* who could not even spell.

Opportunities in plenty occurred for making use of all the wisdom that philosophy could give. Her tribulations were heightened when, as the result of the suppression of all monastic houses, the Convent of les Ricolettes ceased to offer her an asylum. A

wanderer in Paris, she moved from one lodging to another until in the circle of coincidence she took the house in the Rue Dominique behind the Palais de Bourbon, where once had lived her sister-in-law, that unfortunate Comtesse de Choiseul-Stainville who had been immured by her husband in a provincial convent for an intrigue with the celebrated and irresistible Clairval of the Comédie Italien. At the time it had been a great grief to the Duchess, a distress made more acute by the Duke having aided his brother in carrying through this high-handed action that gossip said had been originally inspired by the Comte's enmity of the singer for his successful rivalry towards another lady. Now, as Madame de Choiseul lived on the third floor, in the very rooms where the guilty wife had received her lover, she had still another cause for reflecting on the instability of human things. She let out the other floors, only keeping a room for the Abbé, for whom the infirmities of age made the double journey from his own house in the Rue de Richelieu almost beyond his strength. It was lucky that she could do so, since in the summer of 1792 the Abbé fell down the stairs at Madame de Choiseul's and was obliged to keep his bed for several months, to be peaceably nursed by his former protectress whilst Paris seethed with revolutionary violence.

Not that she had yet finished playing this rôle. For a few months later she was called upon to perform the finest action of her life in saving that of the Abbé from the destruction which nearly overwhelmed him during the early days of the Committee of Public Safety. Hitherto he had kept his place as Curator of Medals, and had drawn solace from presiding over the meetings of the Académie des Inscriptions. When all academies were abolished this resource failed, and he had also the chagrin of seeing his emoluments for his work at the Bibliothèque Nationale cut down. Poverty and ill-health weighed upon him. His anxieties were not lessened when the employees at the Library, his nephew amongst them, began to be

taken off to prison. The Abbé Barthélemy's age and talents at first secured his exemption, but in September, 1793, when the revolutionary fury was rising to its highest pitch, he was arrested one morning whilst at the house of Madame de Choiseul. She herself had every reason for remaining in obscurity, for this alone might secure a continuance of the immunity which she had hitherto enjoyed; the attempt to save the Abbé, on the other hand, might easily have put her own life in danger. But she did not hesitate. She went at once before the Committee and pleaded his cause with such eloquence that after a long and exhausting day—one of the reasons for his being a suspect was the aristocratic bias of the "Voyage d'Anacharsis"!—she obtained the same evening an order for the Abbé's release. Armed with this she went at eleven o'clock at night to the prison of Les Madelonettes and took him home. It is pleasant to imagine the feelings of the two as their carriage rolled through the dark and uneven streets of Paris. It was a worthy climax to a perfect friendship.

The Abbé still lay under the apprehension that his post and his only means of livelihood would be taken from him. He was the more astonished, therefore, when he received the offer of the Directorship of the Bibliothèque Nationale. But his health forbade him to think of acceptance, and for the few remaining years of his life he was allowed to remain undisturbed with his medals.

But not with his mistress. So far Madame de Choiseul had escaped the attentions of the Committee of Public Safety, and the winter of 1793–94, prefaced by the execution of Marie Antoinette in October, passed by without troubling the ailing Citoyenne Choiseul, who had won the respect even of the revolutionaries of the Invalides Quarter. She who had walked scathless amidst the malice of courts was not, however, destined to escape the suspicions that class war engenders. In the spring of 1794 the blow fell which the Abbé, if not she herself, had long feared. One morning the dreaded police agents knocked at

the door of her house in the Rue Dominique and were ushered by the porter to the third floor where the Duchess received them without fear or rancour. In her 'teens she had laid it down that self-control could only be won if duty were her goal and self-respect her motive. Now, after forty years of rigorous discipline, it was not likely that she would fail to be true to herself. The *procès verbal* of her interrogation shows that she inspired those who interrogated her with something of her own clear honesty ; she answered all their questions frankly and gave full particulars of her resources, now reduced to annuities nominally worth 57,000 francs a year, though in the depreciation of the currency their real value was rapidly declining. In spite of her request that she should be allowed to retain the papers referring to her husband's estate, so that she might not be prevented from proceeding with its liquidation, her cabinet was sealed and she herself was taken under arrest to the prison of Les Oiseaux.

The French Revolution was a bloody business, yet it had not the ruthless ferocity of that which our own time has witnessed in Russia, that country of unredeemed barbarism. Les Oiseaux, formerly a convent, and so called from the great aviary in the garden, provided a fairly comfortable place of detention. The prisoners ordered their own food and were waited on by their own servants, and as they paid fairly handsomely for these privileges, the members of the local Commune who profited thereby objected to their clients being sacrificed to the guillotine. Madame de Choiseul, therefore, was fortunate in being sent to such a prison, where the rooms were airy and she could be tended by her faithful woman, Bourgeois. This service, indeed, was essential to her, for since her operation it had been impossible for her to do without a certain amount of nursing. At Les Oiseaux she found herself a fellow-prisoner with her sister-in-law, the Duchesse de Grammont, and it is reasonable to suppose that their life-long antipathy was softened by their common misfortune. With Madame de Grammont was

Madame de Châtelet, formerly a frequent visitor to Chanteloup, who had recently returned from England on the advice of her imperious friend to find that she had put herself within reach of the Revolutionary Tribunal which was particularly hard on *emigrés*.

Many other members of the old nobility were also sent to Les Oiseaux. But there existed a still more delectable prison in the *maison de santé* kept by a certain Dr. Belhomme. Under the *ancien régime* his house had been a useful dumping ground for undesirable relations and others whose liberty might irk great and influential personages. Now, thanks to Dr. Belhomme's friendship with Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, it attained an enviable reputation for the immunity which its inmates could purchase—at a price. Other things helped to recommend it. Visitors were freely admitted, and helped by music, cards and the pleasures of the table the time passed without ennui. It was, perhaps, the last place in which flickered the *esprit* of an age that had ended with the oath in the Tennis Court at Versailles, and Madame de Grammont, avid always for the pleasures of society, successfully used her influence to be transferred there. The change proved fatal to her and Madame de Châtelet, for they were unable to pay Dr. Belhomme's bill, and the Doctor, who in this matter was inexorable, soon sent them to the Conciergerie and their death. Both knew how to die. Madame de Grammont, with the Choiseul courage, pleaded guilty in order to try and save the life of Madame de Châtelet. It was in vain, and both were condemned. Twice during the remaining hours of day Madame de Grammont refused to purchase her life by divulging the hiding-place of her friend's son, replying on each occasion to the members of the Committee: "Jamais, la délation est un vertu civique trop jeune pour moi."

Thus, in the early days of her own imprisonment, did Madame de Choiseul hear of the end of the woman who had been her *bête-noir* during most of her life. If she mourned, the impression of her grief must soon

have been obliterated by the growing dangers which surrounded the surviving members of the old nobility. The heads fell ever faster with Robespierre's increasing thirst for blood. Madame de Grammont perished in April ; during the ensuing months the guillotine worked remorselessly and it looked as if none of the aristocratic suspects would in the end escape the scaffold. On the afternoon of July 25, the 7th of Thermidor, and two days before the movement had declared itself which on the 9th was to put an end simultaneously to Robespierre and the Terror, the relative peace that Les Oiseaux had enjoyed was rudely disturbed. With much noise and shoutings the waggon which acted as the Black Maria of the Revolutionary Tribunal stopped before the door and collected a cargo of the aristocratic inmates, men and women, bishops, counts and marquises. Madame de Choiseul, however, was not included on this list, neither was the Prince de Monaco, also a prisoner at Les Oiseaux, who had married her niece, the daughter of the Comtesse de Choiseul-Stainville. Unfortunately, when the waggon had taken its load of prisoners from Les Oiseaux, there was still room for one or two more, and so the warder in charge went on to the prison of Le Plessis where he took the Prince of Monaco's wife. The young woman and mother of two young children, whom Madame de Choiseul regarded as a daughter, was the first to appear before the court next day. Condemned to death she declared that she was pregnant and thus was saved from the cart on the 8th of Thermidor. That evening she wrote to Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, explaining that she had entered her plea in order to gain the time to cut off her hair with her own hands, so that her children might receive it unsullied by those of the executioner. Her letter breathes a Roman fortitude :

> Citoyen : Je vous previens que je ne suis pas grosse. Je voulais vous le dire ; n' esperant plus que vous veniez, je vous le mande. Je n'ai point

sali ma bouche de ce mensonge dans la crainte de la mort ni de l'éviter, mais pour me donner un jour de plus, afin de couper moi-même mes cheveux, et de ne pas les donner par les mains du bourreau. C'est le seul legs que je puisse laisser à mes enfants ; au moins faut-il qu'il soit pur !

This courageous woman, true scion of the Choiseul stock, died on the 9th of Thermidor with a heroism remarkable even amongst the many heroic women who met death, true to themselves and their order. Madame de Choiseul could not have suffered a heavier blow, which Fate made the more unkind since her niece was amongst the last batch of aristocratic victims to be sacrificed to the blood lust of the Revolution. For on that very day the Mountain and the moderates struck their blow, and the power of the Commune, the Jacobins and the Paris mob was gradually broken by the Thermidorians. So the Terror came to an end and with it the Duchess's chance of escaping from an existence which meant only suffering for body and mind.

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She had but one thing to live for—the carrying out of the promise she had given her husband on his deathbed ; but so long as she was incarcerated and deprived of all the necessary papers she could make no progress in the liquidation of his debts. At the end of Thermidor, therefore, in August, 1794, she applied for her release, claiming this as a measure of justice towards honest creditors and of humanity towards herself. Her petition pointed out that after her husband's death she had sacrificed a considerable fortune in order to fulfil what she considered a sacred duty. She had always submitted to the laws, she had neither children, nor brother, nor sister to answer for, she had never left the country and she had contributed according to her means towards all the expenditure of the Republic. A report from the

Committee of Surveillance of the Invalides Section supporting her appeal testified to the esteem of the public opinion in the Quarter. "She has long given proofs of her civism", it said, "in sacrificing her fortune to satisfy her husband's creditors and to pay the pensions to the citizens formerly in his service. In this spirit she shut herself up in a monastery and for five years underwent all kinds of privation and suffering." It added that, except for the aged Abbé Barthélemy, she was not known to have any friends.

Other testimonials from her neighbours and the poor of the Quarter bore out the universal respect in which she was held. "Humanity, kindness, wisdom, age and infirmities"—these, said one petitioner, made up her personality, adding with revolutionary ardour that hazard had contributed frivolous distinctions of rank and grandeur which should not be brought up against her now. When the prison doctors, not less sympathetic, demanded her release on medical grounds, it was at length accorded, and in October, 1794, after six months of detention, she found herself at liberty.

At liberty, but faced on all sides with difficulty and trouble. Life is a coin, its obverse success, its reverse failure, the value of it the same whichever side it falls, only much or little according to what it has enabled us to make of ourselves. The ultimate creed is stoicism, whether it takes the Christian dress of a Teresa, or the austerer Epicureanism of the Duchesse de Choiseul. The Duchess, at least, had never been ambitious; she had been no idealist to build cloud-capped towers only to find that those she had placed therein belonged to earth; she had never known the enthusiasm, rising to ecstasy, which idealism alone can command. The supreme love, that gives everything and receives everything, had never come within her experience. She had given, but she had not received. Now, in the few remaining years left her, the sense of failure which comes at the end to all, not excepting the saints of God, grew almost intolerable.

Already, after a month of liberty, she could write

to the Abbé that it would have been better had she been executed, for then her faults would have been laid on the guillotine, graciously adding that after all she was glad since life would always have its relish so long as she kept her *digne ami*.

The immediate cause for this despondency was that, in obedience to a decree banishing all members of the old nobility from Paris, she had been forced to go to Fontainebleau. But if Brumaire the foggy had seen her leave the capital, Frimaire the cold saw her return. She had been able to obtain exemption from the decree, thanks to the respect which she never failed to inspire. Existence, however, was not fated to keep its last relish for her much longer. Not only was Frimaire cold; the whole winter of 1795 proved severe and the Abbé's health, long indifferent, began visibly to fail. He managed to keep up his visits more or less regularly till the beginning of the Spring. On April 25 he dined with her for the last time; on the 26th he took to his bed and four days later that pure and unsullied friendship of more than forty years was severed by death. The Abbé, thoughtful to the last for the woman whom he had loved without a trace of selfishness, would not allow her to be told of his condition, and thus Madame de Choiseul was not present with him when he met his end calmly, with Horace's Epistles open beside him. She had suffered so much already that her heart might well have been numbed. But her cry of distress rings out in her letter to Fonscolombe of a month later: " Hélas! c'était presque le seul qui me restait. J'ai tout perdu ou par l'ordre de la nature, ou par l'ordre de la barbarie. J'ai surveçu aux générations que j'avais vues naître; il me soutenait contre tout, rien ne me soulage du vide immense que son absence, son éternelle, son invincible absence me laisse."

Thus the Abbé preceded her into that unknown of which neither recked, and left her almost without a single friend, practically the only one who remained being the octogenarian Duc de Gontaut, the former

gay intimate of the Pompadour, now infirm and nearly blind. And to this loneliness was added the steady aggravation of her affairs. Far from being able to pay off her husband's debts, she began to be faced with the prospect of being entirely deprived of the means of subsistence. Her letters to Fonscolombe in remote Aix in Provence show the distress into which she was fallen ; they show, too, that the carking care of poverty could not affect the nobility of her character. Many years before, at Chanteloup, Boyer de Fonscolombe, always out at elbows, had raffled his watch, the ticket-holders agreeing each to give him an annuity of some thirty shillings of our money. In the upheaval of the Revolution these, not unnaturally, had remained unpaid, and his own poverty induced him in 1796 to remind Madame de Choiseul of the obligations which had been incurred so long ago. In her reply she pointed out that those who had taken tickets were dead or dispersed, but she added that since the transaction had occurred under her roof she regarded herself as responsible and that she would settle the debt directly her various properties and mortgages were restored to her. Fonscolombe much touched, answered that she owed him nothing. " In seeing ", he wrote, " with what strength, what patience and what resignation you support such a great change of fortune, I am ashamed of having troubled you for a moment about myself. How can I dwell on my own situation and complain with such an example before me ? "

Notwithstanding his extreme poverty he sent the Duchess every winter a box of her favourite prunes. She could still enjoy them, for the taste is the last of the senses to capitulate to the tribulations of infirmity. It pained her that he should carry delicacy so far as to pay their carriage—most sensibly of all was she affected by the memories it raised of the years with which Boyer de Fonscolombe was associated. " I have thought to weep," she wrote in 1797, " thinking what it must have cost you. I am

sure, my dear Boyer, you are in no position to incur such superfluous expense and I pray you do it no more. You know well that you have no need for these small means to remind me of you ; I can never forget him whom my husband loved so well and by whom he was so tenderly loved, one with whom I spent the best days of my life and for whom I shall ever keep the warmest, most sincere feelings." The following year the same present called forth a similar answer, pitched in a more sombre key. " You complain of being old, and I, old though I be, complain that I am not old enough."

Both were weighed down by poverty and ill-health, and Fonscolombe, turning in his troubles to the consolations of the religion about which he had hitherto never bothered, tried to make Madame de Choiseul do likewise. If she gave him no hope of her conversion, her reply produced some flashes of the old gaiety, and she rallied him for his sermon so charmingly that he wrote again, confessing this time remorse for his misspent life. Madame de Choiseul dealt lightly with the naïveté of one whose heart had always had the better of his head. " I repeat, my old troubadour," she wrote back, " rest in peace ; all your sins are forgiven you, for I assure you you have never committed any. . . . Both of us possess the quiet of a good conscience, which unfortunately does not prevent the pain that comes from the empty stomachs of those around us—and the cries of hunger are no less painful than those of remorse." Her own resources were, in fact, almost exhausted and she had been lately forced to leave her second floor in the Rue Dominique for a garret in the Rue de l'Université. Another demand from Fonscolombe, at his wits' end how to exist, for the annuity on his lottery tickets, drew a letter from her giving a full statement of her affairs, which owing to the general dishonesty fostered by the Revolution and the depreciation of the currency were in a desperate state. For four years she had lived on loans. Now that her

conscience and imminent bankruptcy prevented her from borrowing more, it seemed, she said, as if she had nothing to do but cross her arms and await death from starvation. Yet she could still laugh when Fonscolombe, sanguine as ever, proposed that they should scrape together their last available resources and tempt fortune in a lottery, though her own ill luck in such ventures, as she pointed out, would only have hastened the inevitable end.

Once more the prunes came, once more Madame de Choiseul's eyes glistened at the gallantry of an offering which stood for a symbol of a past to which both remained loyal. Then, in January, 1797, Boyer de Fonscolombe died, and still another of her contemporaries passed from the scene. With the death soon after, at the great age of ninety, of her brother-in-law, the Duc de Gontaut, who had been reduced to circumstances little better than her own, Madame de Choiseul remained alone of her generation.

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If her contemporaries had all vanished, there was still her nephew, the Comte de Choiseul-Stainville, whose two children she had been looking after since 1792, when he had been forced to flee. Fate, as if anxious to do her one last ill turn, now turned upon him. The Count, who had the Choiseul *fougue*, had migrated to Hanover and there raised a cavalry regiment which had taken part in the wars. He had already once been captured, only to escape from a French prison, when in November, 1795, the British transport on which he and his men were sailing to India was wrecked off Calais and he was again taken prisoner. This time it seemed as if nothing could prevent his suffering the fate of his sister, the Princesse de Monaco. As a traitor found in arms against his country he could hardly escape death. The gravity of his plight might well have dismayed even the inexhaustible courage of Madame

de Choiseul, faced at this late hour with the violent end of her last adult kinsman. Though she could not influence the Directory, as her nephew hoped, she was able to send a member of the Constituent Assembly to watch over his case. In contrast to the lynch law of the Terror, this dragged on, first at St. Omer, then at Calais, being transferred thence to Lille. There for a time the Count was allowed to see his children and to enjoy a certain amount of liberty, during which this chip of the Choiseul block managed to start a liaison with a fair lady of the neighbourhood.

To Madame de Choiseul's distress, instead of these amenities being the prelude to his liberty they only heralded harsher treatment. His children were removed, and he and his fellow prisoners were placed in the dungeons of the Citadel where, to the probability of their being convicted by the tribunal when at last they came up for trial, there was added the certainty that they would die of disease if that trial was unduly postponed. Madame de Choiseul once again did all she could. She knew Madame Tallien, famous or notorious as the Comtesse de Fontenay, whom Tallien, subdued by her fascination, had snatched from the scaffold, and whose influence in the crisis that put an end to the Terror caused her to be known as Our Lady of Thermidor. Madame Tallien was now the social leader of Paris, and to this young beauty Madame de Choiseul addressed herself.

But a greater than Tallien was destined to play a part in the last chapter of Madame de Choiseul's life. The Directory had come to an end with Napoleon Bonaparte's return from Egypt and with his *coup d'état* which overthrew the cumbrous Directory. To him the Count's daughter, then fourteen years of age, wrote a letter which showed that the courage of the Choiseuls persisted to the youngest generation. " Citizen General," she said, " I am embarrassed at writing to you, for I do so without anyone's knowledge and without knowing whether you care to listen to what I say. . . . If this step of mine seems

extraordinary to you, attribute such an indiscretion to my youth and despair." Then she explained the treatment of her father, how he had been for five years harried from one dungeon to another, and she implored the First Consul to take her as a guarantee for her father's promise to fulfil any conditions that might be required of him in exile. "Si on daignait m'enfermer à sa place, ce serait faire le bonheur de ma vie et on serait alors bien sâr de lui dans le lieu de sa déportation." If Napoleon was touched he did not show it at the moment. But soon afterwards Madame de Choiseul received a communication from her nephew couched in so desperate a vein that it was evident something had to be done at once if his life were to be saved. She had acquaintances in Bonapartist circles, by whom she sent a note to Napoleon. It reached him through Josephine, who with her usual kindliness wished to help the great lady of another era. "This note", she put on the margin, "was dictated by the former Duchesse de Choiseul, a woman loved and respected by all who know her. She has supported all evils with an unexampled courage." Directly it came to Napoleon's notice he took steps to have the prisoners released, sending specially to Madame de Choiseul as soon as the decree was signed to acquaint her with the fact. Thus in December, 1799, the Comte de Choiseul came to Paris to thank his aunt for all the trouble she had taken and then started for Germany on his exile, taking care however to pass through Lille and bid adieu to the lady of his heart in that town. From Germany he moved to England, where he was well received and given a pension of £800 a year in recognition of the sufferings he had endured in serving His Britannic Majesty.

The sands had nearly run out, and Madame de Choiseul was soon to have the release for which she longed. Yet till the last moment she never forgot her duty as custodian of her husband's honour. Historians of the old regime had seen fit to attack

the Duke's administration, and with each in turn she took up the cudgels. To the Marquis de Bouillé, whose "Memoirs on the Revolution" had been published in London, she sent her nephew with a protest. But she got little satisfaction. The author expressed his regret at having hurt the feelings of the Duchess "whose person he honoured and virtues he respected more than any man"; that however could not preclude him from criticizing the Duke as a public man. Madame de Choiseul would have been untrue to her sex had she acquiesced in such an answer, reasonable as it appears to us. Another book gave her still more pain, and once more she deputed her nephew to protest to the author. "What a moment to attack us, what a moment to insult us," she wrote. "What has M. de Choiseul done to him? What has Mme de Grammont done? What have I done myself? But it is true that nothing could have warned him that I existed. An honest woman eludes attention as much as a great man attracts it. Make him hear my cries, my dear nephew, since he rends my heart." And she added in reference to the four million francs which the King had lent the Duke in 1784: "M. Bertrand dares to affirm that without this advance M. de Choiseul would have been . . . my pen refuses to trace the infamous word which runs so easily from that of M. Bertrand; but he has happily averred that had it not been for the Revolution his debts would have been entirely liquidated, and still more happily proved that, in spite of the Revolution, they will be ultimately liquidated, unless circumstances intervene which one can neither foresee nor prevent. Will it be the Duke who is to blame? If there is any wrong, it must lie with his widow, who has not been able to manage better; it is her brow which must blush; for him! his eyes were closed at the very breast of honour."

So in almost sublime self-abnegation she wrote from her third floor *mansarde* to her nephew in London, harking back to a time which already belonged

to history, whilst a new Paris and a new France were rising under the genius of its First Consul with whom the last days of her life were to be curiously threaded. He knew all about the great lady of a half-century back who now lived in the barest poverty. Even had he forgotten he would have been reminded by the petitions that he received from citizens who, without being personally acquainted with her, were yet impelled by her repute and their sense of pity to beg that she should receive some recognition from the Head of the State. Napoleon did not have the distinction of recognizing the unique greatness of this French woman by any formal gesture. But she was able, as the last act of her life, through a personal appeal to the First Consul, to secure the revocation of her nephew's exile. In October, 1801, she received the following letter :

> I perfectly remember, Madame, the touching protestation which your nephew sent me from Douai, nearly two years ago. From that moment I promised myself that one day I would let him know that it had moved me. I am much gratified that you have recalled it to my mind, and enabled me to do something that is agreeable to you. BONAPARTE.
>
> MALMAISON, 21*st Vendemiaire*, X.

The Count returned to Paris at once on his aunt's urgent request, to find her on her death-bed, and on December 3, 1801, she ended a life which had been without stain, leaving behind her a memory that ennobles her age and sex.

Perfection itself could not have fashioned a nobler model of a woman. And the imperfect Muse of History, as if to show the rhythm that runs continuously through the chequered story of mankind, caused her to give her nephew before she died a letter to Napoleon, in which she thanked the representative of the new age for having allowed her husband's brother's son to close her eyes in death.

MRS. EDDY; AND THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

SOME ASPECTS OF FEMINISM

Mere historic incidents and personal events are frivolous and of no moment, unless they illustrate the ethics of Truth.

Mrs. Eddy.

With the help of the doctors Candide rapidly grew worse . . .

Voltaire.

MARY BAKER EDDY
AS LEADER OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
(By permission of the Christian Science Monitor Society)

MRS. EDDY, AND THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

I

WHY do we suffer? What is the meaning of pain? Is there any explanation of evil? Can our instinctive feeling that life is good be reconciled with so many clear indications of our reason that it is bad?

Human wisdom and ingenuity have propounded to these questions many answers which extend over the fields of philosophy and religion. The one has generally busied itself with fashioning various kinds of protective armour to make its votaries impervious to the accidents of life, whilst religion has held out means of escape, often recommended by the most highly gilded promises, by which man may elude the pincers of his destiny. Since women surpass men in their ability to endure pain of mind and body, we may easily judge how far either have succeeded in the lives of those two ornaments of their sex who occupy the previous portions of this book. Both suffered and both endured; Madame de Choiseul thanks to her philosophy, St. Teresa thanks to her religion. The inspired Spaniard shows us clearly enough that Catholicism had maintained the central idea of Christianity, which through the Cross made suffering divine. Never before Christ had this solution been put so simply and clearly before men—the solution drawn from esoteric Greek thought that, if suffering is brought within the experience of God, its sting for humanity is drawn and instead of being an evil it becomes a facet of truth. Catholicism took

this point and emphasized it in every possible way. Thus the saint rejoiced in suffering as the most signal mark of the heavenly favour, and only through her ceaseless meditations upon the Passion did Teresa come to be one with God.

A hard question makes a hard answer. Catholicism, listening to the clearly enunciated orders of the Church, has always made the same response. It has softened it a little, perhaps, by allowing that sickness and disease, nay even death itself, can on occasion be overcome through the operation, or mediation of the Saints and particularly of the Virgin. Catholicism, at any rate that of Rome, puts forward a perfectly definite claim that it can heal the sick. But beyond and above this looms the shadow of the Cross. The prime duty of the Christian, it holds, is to follow the example of Christ and to suffer.

Protestantism, indefatigably turning the pages of the Bible, has been less consistent. Giving latitude to individual judgment, it has shaped itself much more closely to the mould of its own age. The Christ of Rome may have undergone various metamorphoses between the two extremes of the ideal *ephèbe* of the Catacombs and the free-thinking connoisseur of Leo X. But they are small compared with the Protean shapes of the Protestant deity, who must often have felt uneasy at the intemperate zeal of his followers. Old Europe, racked with pestilence and war, can show in its time some curious products of the left wing of Christianity, religious sansculottes who exalted suffering to the peaks of insanity. Transplanted to the new world, Protestantism and Puritanism struck new roots, and the Anglo-Saxon, Bible-reading stock, submitting to the optimism and exhilaration produced by the climate and bountiful spaces of the North American Continent, has continued to show the religious vitality of the race. There the religion which is drawn from the Bible has shown its usual sensitiveness to its environment, though Catholicism in the United States has not been entirely insensible to the

syren's song of Progress. Poverty has never been holy to the Protestant. With the advent of a labour-saving, comfort-producing, hygienic age, the austerity of the New Testament has grown mellow. The Churches in America have made a bye-pass round the awkward enigmas which lie at the core of life. Voices there still ask the same old questions, protesting that "civilization is founded on the shambles and every individual existence goes out in a lonely spasm of helpless agony," but these are lost in the speeding on the broad highway of social righteousness, where quickness of acceleration is the most valued of the cardinal virtues.

Out of the welter of religions, however, which gave salt to the life of the American people before the days of the movies and the motor, one has spread over the face of the Republic and beyond its confines. Christian Science has its devotees in practically every great city of the world. Its growth is the most remarkable thing in the contemporary history of religion. A powerful body, which can obtain special privileges in this country for its members, as it did in the amendment to the Nursing Homes Registration Act of 1927, it has grown from the smallest, most unpromising beginnings in about half a century. From its cradle in the modest little town of Lynn, Massachusetts, in the 'seventies it has gradually encompassed the earth until its doctrines by admirably organized propaganda have become a commonplace of knowledge and Mr. Neville Chamberlain, speaking from his place in the House of Commons as Minister of Health, can assert that it "is not a species of quackery which pretends to be something it is not". Faith-healing, of course, is as old as religion and much older than Christianity, and there have not been wanting Protestant sects which have put this in the forefront of their religious practice, sometimes suffering, like the Peculiar People of Essex, at the hands of the civil law for their refusal to follow the accepted tenets of medicine and hygiene. No Christian

Science healer, however, has been persecuted in England since 1906.[1]

But Christian Science, though it is intimately concerned with healing the sick, has not achieved its position in the world by means of its activities in that direction. After all, healthy people predominate in the world and these would pass by a religion which devoted itself purely to pathological ends. Christian Science can point to the sanction of success because it has met the ultimate questions of life with an answer that corresponds to the use of anæsthetics in medicine, and robs orthodox Christianity of its hardness. It has looked pain, suffering, death, the world, the cosmos boldly in the face—and declared that they do not exist. "Divine Science", says Mrs. Eddy, "disclaims sin, sickness and death on the basis of the omnipotence and omnipresence of God, or divine good." The woman who made the discovery "that Mind is All-in-All, and that the only realities are the divine mind and idea" and founded on this revelation a Church which has now in England alone 180 churches and meeting-places is assuredly the most remarkable member of her sex whom America has produced. Not even the Papacy has shown a greater courage in claiming infallibility and universality. "All other systems—systems based wholly or partly on knowledge gained through the material senses are reeds shaken by the wind, not houses built on the rock." "Physical science (so-called) is human knowledge,—a law of mortal mind, a blind belief." "Physiology is one of the apples from the 'tree of knowledge'." Throughout "Science and

[1] Sometimes, however, they have had narrow escapes. At the jury's recommendation the coroner censured the Christian Science parents of their twenty-year-old son who died from tuberculosis in January, 1929. "If the lad had been fifteen years old or thereabouts I should have had no hesitation in advising the jury to commit you for trial for manslaughter," he said, in observing that they had been guilty of gross negligence. But coroners as a rule content themselves with pointing out that organic disease is not curable by Christian Science.

Health" (the text-book of the Christian Scientists) we meet with like affirmations that drive home Mrs. Eddy's system to her followers in Christian, or as she often calls it, Divine Science, and emphasizes the completeness of the revelation that is theirs.

Based thus firmly on its claim to be the final fulfilment of the Christian verity, and offering answers to the fundamental problems of life which commend themselves to many, Christian Science has spread over the whole Anglo-Saxon world and even established itself in other countries of non-Latin stock. Its explanations, too, of the Christian theogony—though in its assertion of the worthlessness and vicious nature of material things it is the child of gnosticism, oldest of the heresies—have this original feature, that for the first time the feminine idea of God has been raised higher than the masculine. If the Christian Scientists address the Almighty as Father-Mother God, their belief that the final revelation, as adumbrated in the Apocalypse, has been granted to a woman is in keeping with the tendency of Anglo-Saxon civilization to place the male in a position of inferiority to the female. Mrs. Eddy has every reason to be regarded as the most successful propagandist of feminism in modern times. Unquestionably she is the richest character, the most original personality in the brief history of the New World.

2

Mary Baker, afterwards Mrs. Eddy, was not thus chosen as the channel of Truth by any haphazard Providence. Many generations of stern, Bible-reading forebears gave her those hereditary proclivities which enabled her to fulfil her destiny. She belonged to the purest Protestant stock of New England and traced her descent back through six generations of Bakers to a certain John Baker, who was already established in Charleston in 1634, only fifteen years after the *Mayflower* had landed its famous freight of

pilgrims. In her blood ran many good English yeoman strains. Hannah Lovewell, her great-grandmother, was herself the granddaughter of an ensign in the Parliamentary Army. The Pikes and the Ambroses, typically English names, were amongst the families with which she could claim kinship. The only foreign admixture, so far as it appears, was a Scots strain which came from her paternal grandmother, Marion McNeil, whose parents had emigrated from Scotland. In their daughter the spirit of her Covenanter forebears burned strongly and at its flame in old age the little Mary, her youngest and favourite grandchild, kindled her own childishly devout imagination. Mary's grandmother was deeply pious, but her piety was tempered by a taste for literature, and it was probably she who first gave Mary the ambition " to write a book " which, indeed, is not an uncommon aspiration of intelligent childhood. The old lady treasured the manuscripts left by her mother that included " Scriptural sonnets," secular verses and even riddles, first cousins to those *logogriphes* with which the Duchesse de Choiseul passed the same hours in a different environment. She claimed, too, that her branch of the McNeils had relationship with Hannah More, who had devoted her literary talents with such signal success to religious and social ends.

Mark Baker, Mary's stern and masterful father, the dominating influence in the timber-built farmstead at Bow, New Hampshire, where the earliest years of her life were passed, had little sympathy with these genealogical suppositions. " A tiger for temper and always in a row," as described by a contemporary, Mark bore about him the unbending self-righteousness of Puritanism. The harshness of his creed was fed by reading the Old Testament, where he would find analogies between the Chosen People of the Old World and the Chosen People of the New. The solid, authoritarian English temperament, born to direct the world's affairs with God as sleeping partner,

achieved a roughly hewn, Rodinesque, embodiment in this successful farmer who was also able to transmit to his daughter the more reflective, more sentimental, yet not less serious, strains of his maternal Scottish ancestry. He quarrelled with his brother in the flesh, with his Congregational brethren in the spirit. Mark Baker was always ready to set the world to rights. The story goes how on one occasion he had mistaken the day of the week and thought Sunday to be a Saturday. On the Monday, which he believed to be the Sabbath, he drove as usual in his gig to church and as he passed his neighbours going about their weekday avocations he solemnly rebuked them for desecrating the Lord's Day and was only convinced of his error by the minister himself. But if everyone agreed that Mark Baker had a strong temper and was too fond of having his own way, agreement was equally general amongst the neighbours that his wife Abigail possessed exceptional charm of manner, a quality her daughter Mary inherited.

Thus the parentage of Mary Baker Eddy could not have been better planned. One strain, however, that of gentility, which the world likes to look for in its leaders, seemed to be missing, until Providence supplied it in Sir John McNeil, G.C.B., sometime His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to the Shah. Her fancy was strangely caught by this distinguished kinsman who, in her own words, " was prominent in British politics ", and it pleased her to take his coat of arms, including the insignia of the Bath which of course were personal to himself. There is no College of Heralds in Republican America and the gesture meant no more than an expression of " sentiment and affection ". When a female descendant of this McNeil living in Scotland denied Mrs. Eddy's claim to connexion with her branch, and when researches failed to substantiate her relationship, the Christian Science leader " requested all biographers to refrain from connecting her with the Rt. Honourable Sir John McNeil, G.C.B., of Edinburgh, sometime Ambas-

sador to Persia". But she kept the arms, crest and motto *Vincere aut Mori,* which in any case meant little after her discovery that any material evidence of death was false since it contradicted the spiritual facts of being. And she retained her paragraph in " Retrospection and Introspection " where her mother's relationship to this knight is stated.

Mary, as the youngest and only delicate member of the family, doubtless received more tender parental solicitude than her brothers and sisters. If any of the Baker children were spoilt—an uncommon thing in New England where Solomon's dictum was held to include girls as well as boys—it was Mary. From her infancy she was subject to convulsive attacks, which later took the form of hysteria, being brought on when any strong emotions agitated her nervous system. Then the girl would throw herself on the floor and lie there like a log, whilst her father admitted himself nonplussed by symptoms so unusual in a Baker. " The Bible says Mary Magdalene had seven devils, but our Mary has got ten," he is reported to have said to a friend when she lay upstairs crying in one of these " tantrums ". And the remark rings true, for always the Bible remained as a background to the life on the farm, colouring conversation and thought, the Bible chiefly of the Old Testament which carried a special message to these pioneers in the Land of Promise wherein they seemed the Chosen People. Jehovah walked upon New England's mountains green. When Mary was eight she repeatedly heard a voice calling her name. " Mary, Mary, Mary," it used to repeat three times in an ascending scale. At first she thought it was her mother, but when after repeatedly answering her she found she was mistaken and that her mother had not called her, she ceased to pay any attention to it. The voice, however, persisted and one day whilst sitting with a cousin, who went by the picturesque name of Mehitable Huntoon, it summoned her so loudly that Mehitable heard it. After it had been repeated the

usual three times she turned sharply to Mary and asked her why she did not obey her mother's call. In the light of Mehitable's corroborative evidence Mrs. Baker was really impressed, and that evening at bedtime she read to her daughter the story of the child Samuel, telling her, when next the voice called, to reply in his words, " Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." But when Mary heard the voice again fear prevented her from saying anything. This disobedience cost her tears, and she resolved that if the opportunity offered itself another time she would do her mother's bidding. It called, she answered, and never after was it heard by her " sensual ear ". So the incident with the somewhat disappointing denouement passed into family history, but the impression it left on Mrs. Eddy stood out as one of the salient events of her childhood and one of the few she has recorded in her own reminiscences of that time. It was as characteristic of herself and her environment as the childish dedication of the little Teresa, when she sallied forth into the streets of Avila with her brother to seek martyrdom at the hands of the Moors.

Her father thought Mary too highly strung. The slightest things upset her, even to the squealing of the pigs, and the story goes how her brother found her one chill November evening singing by their sty to comfort them. And though she went early to the village school with her two elder sisters, Abigail and Martha, its rough and tumble, where the birch besom stood for the *ultima ratio*, proved uncongenial to the young girl, who already seemed different from the others. She wore her clothes tidily—a trait which was to mark her through life—and she exercised care in her choice of words. This quality of Mrs. Eddy's literary style had already shown itself in childhood and it is related that on one occasion, when two neighbours were disputing together before her father, she emerged from the corner with the question : " Mr. Bartlett, why do you articulate so

vociferously ? " An odd child, with an individuality not free from idiosyncrasy, she could hardly have been popular with the other children. Her father, believing that her brain was too big for her body, kept her much away from school, a proceeding which, we may believe, he found the easier since it coincided with his youngest daughter's own predilections. But the little girl—and our authority is Mrs. Eddy—used her leisure at home to become familiar with the Latin grammar, which she soon came to know as well as the Westminster Catechism. Her " favourite studies were natural philosophy, logic and moral science " and from her eldest brother Albert, then at the University, she received lessons during the vacations in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. With Albert, the furthest removed from her in age, she enjoyed a closer intimacy than with the rest of her family, and Albert, who felt vague disquiet at the excessive sensibility of her emotions, did what he could to train and discipline her mind.

The child is mother of the woman and Mary Baker, though she might take desultory excursions into the Greek and Latin grammars and even dally with the difficulties of Hebrew, centred her thoughts on the Bible of the Authorized Version, and on God. Some ascribed her unusual phraseology to the influence of the Psalmists and the Prophets, whom she was constantly reading. The immanence of the divine Power surrounded her. The feeling that she lived in her great Taskmaster's eye, that God was ever present, which later was to be the very fibre of Christian Science, ordered all her doings. She prayed seven times a day, like Daniel, and like David she composed her own prayers. Impelled by the desire to express herself in words she wrote verse, for poetry, she said, suited her emotions better than prose. One of these juvenilia she gave to the world in " Retrospection and Introspection," not perhaps for any intrinsic merits (the title " Alphabet and Bayonet " anticipates Edith Sitwell) but because the lines

Hero and sage arise to show
Science the mighty source

which occur in it may be taken as a presage of what was to be.

Many vicissitudes, however, were to intervene before she discovered the secrets of the science here first mentioned. Her character was to be tried, both in the opposition of good people, as befell St. Teresa, and of bad—specially of bad. The first, and more difficult, the battle of good against good began with her father. Mark Baker's stern Puritanism held firmly to the doctrine of predestination; Mary, sure in the guidance of her feminine instincts, upheld the power of Love, God's Love, through which all might hope to receive pardon. Her father could ill suffer this: without predestination there could be no elect, and if there were no elect, one man was as good as another; besides it little flattered his sense of parental authority that his child, his youngest child not yet in her teens, should hold an opinion unsanctioned by his approval. So he set about asserting himself, and no doubt made life very uncomfortable for everybody, and specially for the rebellious Mary. But it was in vain; his daughter had inherited his own doggedness and refused to bend. Tongues began to wag. The neighbours, not too sorry to see the masterful Mark Baker encounter his match, shook their heads and observed that Mary, in spite of her learning, had her father's temper. At length the girl's frail physique succumbed under the strain and the family doctor was summoned. But the cure came from another quarter, for her mother, as she bathed her feverish temples, told her to lean on God's love and to seek His guidance in prayer. The rest can be told in her own words, written, it is true, from the vantage ground of Christian Science: "I prayed; and a soft glow of ineffable joy came over me. The fever was gone and I rose and dressed myself in a normal condition of health. Mother saw this and was glad. The physician marvelled; and the 'hor-

rible decree ' of predestination—as John Calvin rightly called his own tenet—forever lost its power over me."

Yet her father only stood for the religious views of the society in which she moved, and the repercussion of these incidents caused her to be publicly examined by the pastor. Here again her courage stood her well. The pastor, an unimaginative Calvinist, questioned her about predestination and she replied that she could never unite in communion with the Church into which she had been born if she had to assent to this doctrine. She was equally vague about the actual date of her regeneration, quoting in answer to his question the verse of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." To us it all sounds rather priggish, but it did not do so to the members of the Bow Congregational Church. They melted before such firmness, united with such youthful and godly grace, and amidst the tears of the congregation the pastor relented and admitted her to Church membership. She had withstood the united efforts of father and pastor. Clearly this girl of twelve was of no ordinary mettle.

3

The incident marked the culmination of her childhood. She had been true to herself and gained her own way, but the nervous cost had been great and her mother thought it well to send her on a visit to friends in Boston. A long stay in one of its lovely suburban homes gave her a respite from the austerity of her own and an introduction to the humane life of New England's intellectual capital. In these congenial surroundings her nature developed and the stirrings of adolescence, with its acuter perception of wonder and beauty, are shown in a poem of this time.

> Here is life! Here is youth! Here the poet's world-wish,—
> Cool waters at play with the gold-gleaming fish;

run two of its lines. But whilst she could celebrate in girlish effusions the charm of the country-seat where she began to experience the happiness that comes with the unfolding of personality, she still reminded herself that Nature is only a dress, that the real loveliness dwells in the spirit:

> Earth's beauty and glory deludes as the shrine
> Or fount of real joy and of visions divine;
> But hope, as the eaglet that spurneth the sod
> May soar above matter, to fasten on God . . .

Was this aspiration another reflection of her previous puritanical upbringing? Or was it the shadow of the revelation that was only to become clear to her at the age of forty-five? Christian Science apologists have hinted at the latter. Nothing is so fatally easy as to interpret things with the knowledge born of after-time, and the biographer who has pointed out that the poetess herself, fifty years later, considered it not without significance has done enough.

In any case the hard environment of Bow was soon to be exchanged for softer influences. When Mary was fifteen and her two elder sisters eighteen and twenty, her father sold his farm and bought another on the outskirts of Tilton, New Hampshire. Here she was to spend the most formative years of her youth. Tilton had the advantage of offering the amenities of a town whilst not being so big as to crush the development of individuality. The life was, of course, narrow and the local church remained the centre of social and intellectual intercourse; a little learning, one may suspect, went a long way, and Mary's reputation as a poetess was easily won. Yet Tilton offered the essentials of culture, of which she was able to take advantage. At the local private Academy, which gave a polite education to the sons and daughters of the well-to-do citizens, she seems to have been looked upon as rather a backward pupil and the reminiscences of her school-fellows when she had become famous describe her manners, heightened by something approaching vanity in dress and by her

sesquipedalian words, as "languishing". The adage about the prophet in his own country, however, is applicable to Mrs. Eddy and it is worth noting that Tilton is not amongst the twenty-five towns of New Hampshire wherein Christian Science has established itself.

If Professor Dyer H. Sandhorn, the Head Master of the Tilton Academy, "corrected the faults which private study had engendered", a more positive influence was that of the Rev. Enoch Corser, Pastor of the Congregational Church and the leading cleric in the town, for in New Hampshire Congregationalism was the sect of the aristocracy. With him she had long talks on predestination and other grave topics that do not easily lend themselves to solution. He regarded her as his pupil, she for him had the respect and affection which did not prevent her from maintaining her own opinions. Thus she gained his esteem without yielding her point of view. To his son Bartlett, who, as the rejected suitor of Mary's sister, Abigail, had also a certain interest in the family, he once declared that he had never known a young student with such depth and independence of thought and he proceeded to promise a great future for her. There is no reason to suppose that Bartlett Corser, recalling in his old age his father's words to him in his youth, heightened or embroidered them, or that the pastor had not the greatest respect for her intellectual and spiritual gifts. "Mary," the Congregational Minister is reported to have said to her once, when they had been arguing the eternal question of the Why and the How, "Mary, your poetry goes beyond my theology. Why should I preach to you?" This intimacy bore its fruit. She was admitted to Communion when she was seventeen, and thereupon took charge of a class of infants in the Sunday school. Her voice, her smile, the neatness of her silk dress, the chestnut curls escaping from her bonnet which framed her face in its white ruching—a face dominated by lustrous blue eyes that turned to black under the

stress of emotion—these went to make up the sum of impressions which the personality of the slim girl of eighteen conveyed to the other members of the congregation.

Thus she stood on the threshold of womanhood, her mind coloured by the prevailing solemnity of her environment. New Hampshire at that time represented a rigid type of Puritanism which balanced, and even intensified, its pursuit of worldly success by its chastening views of leisure—views which afterwards became embodied in Christian Science. " Where then is the necessity for recreation and procreation ? " is a question asked in " Science and Health." " Smoking leads to drinking," used to be one of the maxims aimed by stern parents of the Early Victorian era at the heads of their male children. In New Hampshire, one of the homes of the Prohibition movement in the United States, teetotalism had already become a political issue at the time Mrs. Eddy was a young woman, and she remained all her life an inflexible opponent of " alcohol "—that generic word of Arabian origin which includes the good with the bad, the health-giving wines of France with the rawest death-dealing spirit of the bootlegger—and tobacco. Just as no member of the old Churches of Christendom can be a total abstainer—though Latin Christianity in withholding the cup from the laity confines this practical disability to its priests—so no Christian Scientist can smoke a cigarette without disobedience to his leader's commands.

But if the restraints in social intercourse were considerable and the life led by Mary Baker would have been considered intolerably austere by the present generation, she had to take no such decision as Teresa of Avila under analogous circumstances. She did not have to choose between the world and the cloister. Protestantism has never extolled virginity as a virtue and the sternest Puritan does not admit any antithesis between marriage and godliness. Like every other girl in Tilton Mary must have looked for-

ward to the time when she would take a husband. In the midst of such reflections we may imagine that the death of her eldest brother Albert, just when he was about to embark on a political career of high promise, came as a terrible shock. Fortunately for her, a friend of her younger brother, George Washington Glover, shortly afterwards visited Tilton. He saw Mary, he fell in love, he wooed her and captured her heart. A brief courtship ended in their marriage and at the age of twenty-two Mary Baker Glover left her father's house for Charleston, S. Carolina, where her husband's business lay.

Yet Catholicism, in its implicit denial that the highest forms of the religious life are compatible with the practice of the conventional domestic virtues, has its roots in age-long experience, and the Christian Science apologists, in asserting that their leader was, or would have been, an ideal wife and mother, only show the sentimentality of Protestantism. Ambition, masterfulness, self-confidence—on these her character rested, and these are not wifely qualities. It is unlikely that the union of this nervous, strong-willed and idealistic woman with the big, unimaginative business man bent on making a fortune would have made a happy marriage, and if it had she would never have accomplished her life work. Certainly her disapproval of slavery which her followers emphasize, though it did credit to her heart, augured ill for a perfect accord with her husband, who could only prosper in business through slave labour. The future did not bring the matter to the test, for within six months of his marriage George Glover was struck down by yellow fever, and eight months after she had left her father's roof Mrs. Glover found herself back again in her old home at Tilton.

4

A FEW weeks later the young widow became a mother, after a difficult delivery which brought back in intensified form the symptoms of hysteria, symptoms that

had shown themselves throughout Mary Baker's childhood and youth. Far from being able to suckle her infant, she could not suffer him in the room. She was reduced to so nervous a state that the least noise upset her. Within the house everyone moved on tip-toe; outside it straw and tan-bark deadened the sounds of traffic. The child was therefore put out to wet-nurse, and the blacksmith's daughter, a girl who owned the beautiful name of Mahala, came to tend the mother. Many accounts remain of her complaints at this time, complaints not uncommonly experienced by delicate, highly-strung young women after the birth of their first child and often removed by their bearing a second. The symptoms of neurosis showed themselves particularly in insomnia, and so obstinate did this prove that she had to be rocked to sleep. This partiality for rocking grew until a special cradle was built for her, and an indoor swing suspended on which she could be rocked still more violently. She could enjoy this form of motion for long together, and the village boys used to earn honest pennies by providing the motive power. Sometimes, if her nerves were more on edge than usual, they had to do this out of sight by pulling a string which ran through the window to the balcony outside.

When other means failed to quiet her nerves, Mary Baker used to send for a local bridge builder who also had a reputation as a mesmerist. To the efforts of this pontifical dabbler in the occult she proved particularly sensitive, and John Clark, who unwittingly was thus building a greater bridge than any of his material structures, has the distinction of being the first person to bring the future founder of Christian Science into direct relations with the psychic. She had been long interested in such things. From a child Mary Baker was used to the discussion of spiritualism, mesmerism, and similar subjects. The Frenchman Poyer, popularizer in America of the ideas originally ventilated in the Paris of the seventeen-eighties by Dr. Mesmer who counted the Duc de

Choiseul amongst his clients, remarks in his book, published when Mary was sixteen years old, that animal magnetism indisputably constituted the most stirring topic of conversation in the New England of that time. Now that John Clark had proved Mary to be psychic, her interest revived and she began to experiment for herself. She took part in spiritualist séances, gaining some reputation as a successful medium; indeed her spirit-writing at such a séance so affected one enquirer that his reason became temporarily unhinged. She was reputed also to hear "rappings" and to receive notices from the dead.

Thus, whilst still in her twenties, the young widow Glover came to be regarded by local opinion as a woman set apart from the rest of her sex. The prestige that simple-minded communities accord to those who dabble in authorship was also hers, for she contributed to the poet's corner in the local newspaper and even wrote on political questions wherein she showed her independence by airing views out of keeping with the Democrat traditions of the Baker family. One day, at a political party in her sister's house, she is said to have declared emancipation to be written on the wall. "Mary," cried Abigail; "Do you mean to say that in my house?", receiving the reply, "I dare to speak what I believe in any house"—a question and answer that foreshadowed their future estrangement.

Pædagogics offered another field for activity. An attempt to start a kindergarten in Tilton was received with some amusement by her fellow townswomen who did not know the revolution Pestalozzi had worked in education. Like that pioneer in humaner methods she proved a poor disciplinarian. Tongues whispered how the children used to march round the schoolroom, singing

> We will tell Mrs. Glover
> How much we love her,
> By the light of the moon
> We will come to her,

which made gossips shake their heads and observe that Mary Baker had always been odd, and was more eccentric than ever, now that she was a widow, whilst anyhow it was absurd to suppose that a school could be disciplined by love. The critics had the satisfaction of seeing their criticisms justified. Twice did she attempt to make such an educational venture, and twice did she fail, thus adding to the story of frustration that make up these years of her youthful widowhood.

The only interest to have given them harmony would have been the son that she had borne, and that interest was wanting, for the ties between mother and child proved less close than those between child and nurse—that Mahala who had originally entered the Baker household to look after the mother. With the blacksmith's family the little George spent most of his time and when he was four years old and Mahala was about to be married, the arrangement was made that she should take him with her to her new home. Mrs. Eddy, referring to this incident later in life, tells how she knelt by the side of the child's cot the night before the separation hoping "for a vision of relief from this trial". Afterwards she expressed her feelings in a poem "Mother's Darling," of which she has given us a stanza.

> Thy smile through tears, as sunshine o'er the sea
> Awoke new beauty in the surge's roll!
> Oh, life is dead, bereft of all, with thee—
> Star of my earthly hope, babe of my soul.

If this does not make very good poetry, or even very good sense, we must remember that Mary Baker's Pegasus was not a thoroughbred. Mrs. Eddy, for all her remarkable qualities, remained in many respects a thoroughly conventional woman. Catholicism has many glorious examples to show of the religious instinct triumphing over the maternal instinct. But American sentiment will have it that every woman should be the perfect wife and mother, and Mrs.

Eddy, influenced by this, wished it to be thought she would have been both these if circumstances had not prevented her. Yet it is difficult to believe that, whilst she was able to withstand father and sister on religious and political questions, she could not do so in the case of her child. And there appears to be no good reason why they, who had always treated her kindly, should have persisted in any arrangement that ran counter to her own desires. "Mary acts like an old ewe that won't own its lamb. She won't have the boy near her." The remark is attributed to her father by hostile critics, and may be apocryphal. But it rings truer than the talk, first of family jealousy and then of a plot which removed the boy from his mother's control for ever. The fact remains that so long as Mahala continued a spinster George Glover spent most of his time with her; and when she became Mrs. Cheney she took him with her to her new home in Groton, some sixty miles away to the north-west. Meanwhile the widow Glover, now entering upon her thirties, sank gradually into a state of more or less chronic invalidism—which her critics have described as hypochondria.

5

But the youngest daughter of Mark Baker, who was now grown to be a man of note in the neighbourhood, had much farther to go before she reached what must have seemed the nadir of a shattered life. The next step in this record of apparent failure was her second marriage. A certain Dr. Daniel Patterson, a relative of Mark Baker's second wife—for Mary's mother had died four years previously—came on a visit, and at once took an interest in Mrs. Glover's case. Himself a dabbler in homœopathy he interested the semi-invalid in this then novel method of healing. He tried his skill upon her and she reacted favourably to the treatment. From prescribing as a doctor to wooing as a lover was only a step, and there is no

reason to suppose that Mary Baker, who throughout her life was peculiarly susceptible to the attraction of rude health in others, remained heart-whole under the assaults of this self-confident, genial and rather vulgar man. He asked the consent of her father, who pointed out the obstacle of Mary's ill-health. But Dr. Patterson made light of this and the pair were duly married in the parlour of the Baker house, the bridegroom carrying his bride downstairs for the ceremony and carrying her up again afterwards.

"My dominant thought in marrying again was to get back my child," said Mrs. Eddy, inspired by the pardonable desire to explain this "very unfortunate marriage". Three years, however, were to elapse before she saw her son, years she lived at Franklin, the adjoining township to Tilton and so far as we know in perfect accord with her husband. For this continued separation she afterwards blamed Dr. Patterson. Again one suspects sentiment, for he could hardly have held out against the obvious justice of his wife's desire, in which she would have been backed by her father, from whom her husband was continually receiving assistance. At length, in 1856, the Pattersons moved to North Groton in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and became neighbours of the Cheneys, and there she again renewed intercourse with her son, now a high-spirited boy of twelve. George continued to live with his adopted parents whilst his mother lamented and tried to rectify his backwardness as a scholar. But the boy was turbulent, the mother's nerves none of the best and difficulties arose. Abigail intervened to settle them, and settled they finally were by the Cheneys seeking their fortune in the west and taking the boy, George, with them. Mary Baker did not see her son again till he was thirty-four and himself the father of two children.

So the unhappy chronicle of Mary Baker's life went on, presenting a story of low health punctuated by nervous attacks in which she lay prostrate,

apparently more dead than alive. Daniel Patterson continued to combine his duties as doctor, nurse and husband. He prescribed for her, he carried her up and down stairs, and in the performance of small services such as picking up her handkerchief and adjusting her shawl he showed those qualities of gallantry which made him a favourite with women. Yet their relations, though not unmarked by mutual tenderness, were inharmonious. The time was to come nearly twenty years later when Mary Baker, having discovered her vocation, could then proceed to choose a satisfactory husband—a husband who was also a disciple. To Daniel Patterson his wife was a woman, to be loved doubtless but also to be humoured and cajoled. Mary, on the other hand, found her Scotch sense of thrift continually outraged by his fecklessness in money matters, and—an even more serious thing—the same masculine charms that had attached her to him influenced other ladies. His itinerant dental practice, which took him away from home a good deal, also reacted unfavourably on her health. At such times she was peculiarly liable to nervous attacks, and on one occasion a neighbour drove all through one winter night to summon her husband, who on hearing the news, which he received whilst attending a patient, remarked coolly that he thought she could wait until he had finished his job in hand. Half a century later, when a Christian Science Church was given to Concord by Mrs. Eddy, the incident was recalled in a paragraph of the *Plymouth Record*, of July 15, 1904.

> With the announcement of the dedication of a Christian Science Church of Concord, the gift of Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, the thoughts of many of the older residents have turned back to the time when Mrs. Eddy, as the wife of Daniel Patterson, lived in this place. These people remember the woman at that time as one who carried herself above her fellows. With no stretch

of the imagination they remember her ungovernable temper and hysterical ways and particularly do they remember the night ride of one of the citizens who went for her husband to calm her in one of her unreasonable moods.

A softer picture of this period in her life is painted by the faithful, a picture in which the gentle rumour of saintliness spread through the neighbourhood, whilst Mrs. Patterson lay a victim to spinal weakness, reading the Bible daily and pondering the cures of the early Church. "They shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover." The statement was categorical; only belief was necessary to enjoy this power. Power and piety—the two went together. If one, why not the other? The past floated through her mind, the Voice of her childhood, her own cure as a child at which the doctor had "marvelled" and other events of her youth which seemed to be inexplicable by ordinary reasoning. With these somewhat dim religious lights the picture has one or two higher tones; the aristocratic neighbours, great dames in rustling silks who used to call upon her as a woman who, if eccentric, was yet well-born and one of themselves—these on the one hand, and the poor and simple on the other afforded her the opportunity of human companionship. She felt more at ease with the simple. For one of them, who regarded her as a saint, she performed a wonder. The woman had taken Mrs. Patterson her baby suffering from blindness. Touched by the woman's faith she is said to have lifted the child in her arms and raised her thought to God, assuring the mother as she gave it back that He was able to help His children. The mother looked into her baby's eyes and they were healed, so that both she, and Mrs. Patterson, were struck with awe. This Christian Scientists show as the portrait of Mary Baker Eddy when she was entering upon the fifth decade of her life.

6

THE time now drew close when her real career was to begin and she could escape from the narrow sphere of domestic life, which galled her spirit, into the larger world. Her husband had gone to seek his fortune in the Civil War, and impetuous as ever, had approached too near the firing-line in the battle of Bull Run, only to be captured as a spy. This had drawn a poem from her, addressed to a bird flying south :

> Oh ! to the captive's cell I'd sing
> A song of hope—and freedom bring—

runs a couplet. The whole bears the evidence of the tender feeling that, anyhow in absence, inspired Mrs. Patterson for her husband. But she could not live on sentiment, and Abigail, always ready to help her youngest sister whom she loved more than any of the others, again took her in and looked after her. Back in Tilton, Mary's health grew worse than ever. At no time had her situation seemed so hopeless as when she lay now, a penniless invalid in her sister's house, with her husband a prisoner of the Confederate Army. Nevertheless she had reached the turn in her fortunes, a revolution with which the name of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby is intimately connected.

The personage answering to this racy appellation was by trade a clockmaker who little by little had drifted first into mesmerism and then into faith-healing. A man of an enquiring turn of mind, he had gradually come to the conclusion that the cures originally attributed to hypnotic power, depended for their success on psychological factors which could be secured merely by personal influence. In 1859, when well advanced in middle age, he set up as a faith-healer in Portland and even established a reputation for the cures he worked. Mrs. Patterson heard of these and with her husband's knowledge wrote to Quimby in 1861, asking him to come and

see her. This he had been unable to do and now in the following year she begged her sister to allow her to go to him for treatment. But Abigail, thinking him to be a quack, refused, and sent her sister instead to a Hydropathic Institute at Hill, New Hampshire.

During the summer months of 1862 which she spent there Mary Baker met many other patients who had also heard of Quimby and determined to visit him by hook or by crook. With this end in view she saved every cent she could and finally reached Portland in October. She was so weak that she had to be helped up the stairs of the hotel where Quimby practised, and when she entered his consulting rooms her frail appearance made a vivid impression upon those present. But as soon as she had placed herself in the hands of this self-taught healer, who professed to work his cures through the benevolent power of mind, a profound change occurred. Mary Baker responded at once to his methods, which consisted of bringing into play the full force of his admittedly dominating personality in order to influence the mental condition of his patient. He had a penetrating eye which seemed to look into their soul, a kindly manner, an erect and yet venerable figure. "Error is sickness, truth is health: Understanding is God: God is Wisdom, God is Principle: Error is matter." He would address them such maxims as these, and to impress still further the sufferer's sense of his healing power, he would rub their head with one hand and lay the other on their stomach. Whatever the nature of his method, whether mesmerism, faith-healing, or mere charlatanry, it cured Mary Baker of her nervous spinal complaint and before she left Portland she climbed the 182 steps of the dome in the Town Hall to signalize her recovery.

7

Thus, after half a lifetime of suffering, she had been suddenly healed of her ills, and she overflowed with

gratitude. Never used to control her feelings, she wished now to spread the fame of Quimby abroad without delay. Early in November she pointed out in a letter to the Portland *Courier* that her cure had been worked neither by spiritualism, nor by animal magnetism (the term by which the methods of our old friend Dr. Mesmer were described in New England). "The truth which he establishes in the patient cures him." She went on, using the Biblical language so dear to her, to declare that at present she saw "dimly and as trees walking" the great principles which underlay Dr. Quimby's faith and works, and she ended by declaring it to be a "very spiritual doctrine, but the eternal years of God are with it". Such zeal excited the laughter of the rival paper which could not preserve its gravity at the comparison of Quimby with Christ. In no way disconcerted she sent a second communication to the *Courier* in which she declared that Quimby had rolled away the stone from the sepulchre of error. And she left Portland with Quimby in the forefront of her thoughts.

Back in New Hampshire she spread the news of his wonder-working power. "I am to all who see me", she wrote to him, "a living monument of your power. . . . The explanation of your curative principle surprises people, especially those whose minds are all matter." So lively were her sentiments that they prompted her to a sonnet which began:

'Mid light of Science sits the sage profound
Awing with classics and his starry lore,
Climbing to Venus, chasing Saturn round
Turning his mystic pages o'er and o'er.

It was only natural that, so long preoccupied with ill-health, she should be able to talk now of little except her good health. Quimby and his methods filled her conversation, and she managed to persuade her sister to take her son, the wayward Albert, to be cured of his bad habits, which included drinking and smoking. In her zeal against tobacco the young man's aunt personally treated him for this vice,

feeling whilst she did so " a desire to smoke herself ". In Albert Baker's case Quimby could do nothing and Abigail returned strengthened in her former conviction of his quackery. But this in no way shook Mary's confidence. Though cured of her nervous affliction, she still suffered from minor ailments and for these she received absent treatment. " I would like to have you in your omnipresence visit me at eight o'clock this evening," she writes, asking him to cure her of certain " small beliefs "—the later phraseology of Christian Science is beginning to emerge—which are " stomach trouble, back-ache and constipation ".

That year of the Civil War was the first time of happiness she had known since girlhood. " I mean not again to look mournfully into the past," she tells Quimby, " but wisely to improve the present." She had regained health and strength, and used it in going to Washington to see about her husband's release and in the war-work of preparing lint and bandages for the hospitals. Yet she could not live the humdrum social life. Quimby and Quimbyism possessed her. Partly with a view to ensure her own well-being, and also prompted by the spirit of enquiry she desired to investigate further; she felt that she must know more about Quimby and gain a deeper insight into his system. Early in 1864, therefore, she visited Portland a second time and sat again at the feet of the well-meaning wonder-worker. Most afternoons she spent talking with him in his office; she would sit till late in the night writing down what she had learned and transcribing the manuscripts Quimby had lent her, those manuscripts over which controversy has since raged with all the ardour that religion inspires. When she left Portland for the second time she was more than ever decided in her admiration, and we find her writing to him: " Who is wise but you? Doctor, I have a strong feeling that I ought to be perfect after the command of science."

At Portland she had become friendly with two other patients of Dr. Quimby, a Miss Jarvis and a Mrs. Sarah Crosby, and on leaving him she had the good fortune to be able to stay with both in turn and thus to remain in the same congenial atmosphere of faith in the Doctor's system and of love for his personality. Continuing her tentative efforts to act as a healer she treated Miss Jarvis, also herself receiving absent treatment—or angel visits as they were poetically called—which she passed on. She began to think of taking other patients, but decided she had not yet emerged from her state of pupilage. Once the Doctor's apparition appeared to her in her room, but when she spoke "it turned and walked away". She delivered, too, a lecture at the Town Hall of Warren on "P. P. Quimby's Spiritual Science healing disease, as opposed to Deism or Rochester Rapping Spiritualism". Her mind burgeoned under the impulses that Phineas Quimby had set in motion and she communicated to those around her the stimulating charm of her presence. Miss Jarvis at the mere mention of her going had a relapse, and Mrs. Crosby described her, years later and long after they had quarrelled, as the most invigorating influence she had ever known. At the remote and dull Crosby farm she had trances, which, like the Quimby manuscripts, have raised the keen winds of religious disputation. Their substance is admitted; Mary Baker delivered messages to Sarah Crosby that purported to come from her brother Albert. One of these warned her that while his sister loved her as much as she was capable of loving anyone, she might use Mrs. Crosby's confidence to further any ambitions of her own. This and many other messages, some spoken and some written, came to Sarah Crosby through her guest. Mrs. Eddy's followers explain it all as a pleasantry on her part to cure Mrs. Crosby of her credulous belief in spiritualism. Apart from the dubious taste of employing the name of her dead brother for such a hoax, this frolicsomeness consorts

ill with the portentous solemnity of her puritanical upbringing and with her own intensely earnest nature, to which gaiety always remained foreign.

After these amenities she rejoined her husband in the autumn of 1864 at Lynn, the Massachusetts town that is the Bethlehem of Christian Science. He had preceded her, an advertisement in the local paper some three months previously announcing his return and the fact that " he was the first to introduce LAUGHING GAS in Lynn for Dental purposes." She took part in the local life of the place, gaining useful experience of administration in the Lodge of Good Templars where she became a prominent member, speaking often and always commanding attention. Here, as elsewhere, she talked " philosophy ", and her fellow-members were impressed, if they did not always understand what she said. " Smart but queer," is reported to have been their verdict about her. And always her pen was active. Yet in spite of everything she was unhappy. Her followers relate how in these months she fell back again into " anguish, alarm and terror ", dominated by the power of animal magnetism which she was never completely to throw off.

Only a little more than twelve months had passed thus when Quimby died, making a noble end and remarking with the courage of a Socrates that he set out on his journey with no more trepidation than if he were going to Philadelphia. Mary Baker's grief was sincere and unfeigned, and, as usual when moved, she gave vent to her feelings in verse. The conclusion of that elegy expresses her sentiments towards the defunct faith-healer :

> Rest should reward him who hath made us whole
> Seeking, though tremblers, where his footsteps trod.

She grieved. Quimby had meant much to her, and her feminine nature made her fear for herself now that she could no longer lean on him. But Mary Baker had only thus begun to envisage a future wherein she could no longer look to him to guide

her trembling footsteps when, returning one evening from a Lodge meeting, she slipped in the ice-covered street and was picked up insensible. This, "the 'fall' in Lynn", from which dates the official birth of Christian Science, occurred on February 1, 1866.

8

LIKE so many other early events in the history of the new religion it has been variously related. Dr. Alvin Cushing, who attended her and from whom affidavits referring to the case were drawn over forty years later, seems to have regarded the cure as being due to the patient's natural recuperative powers suitably aided by his professional skill. He gave her morphine and continued his visits till the 13th of the month, when she was nearly normal; "an interesting patient" was his recollection of her, more interesting than the case, the result of shock and concussion. Mrs. Eddy, however, looked at the matter otherwise. True, she had taken his medicine, but only because she had been roused from semi-consciousness for the purpose, and on the third day, which symbolical fitness caused to be a Sunday, she sent everyone out of the room, opened her New Testament and read of the healing of the man with the palsy. Over twenty years later she relates how at that moment she had a revelation, "the lost chord of Truth healing as of old". "The miracles recorded in the Bible which had before seemed to me supernatural, grew divinely natural and apprehensible. Adoringly I discerned the principle of His holy heroism and Christian example on the cross when He refused to drink the vinegar and gall, a preparation of poppy and aconite, to allay the tortures of the crucifixion." All pain at that moment left her and she rose and dressed. She walked into the parlour, where she reassured her doubting friends, who, however, could not understand her words. The revelation had come to her of "Christ Science, or

divine laws of life" and she named it Christian Science.

Truth looks different from different sides. To Mrs. Eddy in a retrospect seen through the shimmering hues of Christian Science, this cure assumed a glorious form, tinged with the colour of divine revelation. At the time she could not see it thus illuminated and on February 14, eleven days after she had become the recipient of Truth, she wrote to a friend who, like her, had been interested in Quimby in less confident strain. "I confess I am frightened, and out of that nervous heat my friends are forming, spite of me, the terrible spinal affection from which I have suffered so long and so hopelessly. Now can't you help me? I believe you can." This is set in a key more related to the fact that Dr. Cushing, six months later, treated her for a cough. But afterwards these things fell into place and proved important, or negligible, as they contributed to the revelation which had come to her.

For the moment, however, the light shone intermittently whilst her worldly path grew thornier than ever. Hardly had she made up her mind to devote herself to stating the principles of Life than her husband made up his mind to leave her. He accompanied this separation by giving her a voluntary allowance of £40, and the fact that this arrangement was come to after consultation with his sister-in-law, Abigail, shows that she maintained the more or less neutral attitude that family discretion demands. Seven years later Mary Baker obtained a divorce and so finally closed this incident in her history.

That summer and autumn she lived precariously with various families in Lynn, often not without friction. Mary Baker had immense personal charm, but she had also an authoritarian nature which her new-found enthusiasm and power had not softened. Ceaselessly revolving high thoughts, it was natural that she should allow others to do the small offices which make up the daily routine of domestic existence. She considered doubtless that her contribution to the

general welfare was more than repaid by the benefits she conferred of a spiritual kind. Yet ingratitude followed her; she healed the sick and even the sufferer might refuse to admit the cure, so "ridiculously inadequate" did her method appear. From the affidavits which strew the history of those years one gathers, too, that she still took part in spiritualistic séances, though the communications she now received came from the spirit of one of the Apostles, or of Jesus Christ, as befitted her own heightened spiritual state.

Amidst the mild interest, or the open incredulity, which her ideas occasioned, she met one man, by name Hiram Crafts, himself an amateur spiritualist, who listened more attentively. Crafts spent the winter working as a shoemaker operative in one of the factories in Lynn, and lodged in the same house as Mary Baker. He sat next to her at the common table and every evening after supper lingered long to listen to her conversation. In the end it was agreed that she should accompany him when he returned to his home at East Stoughton where, in return for her board, she should initiate him into the mysteries of her system. That Hiram Crafts proved an able pupil is evident from the advertisement in the local paper of the following May, headed "To the Sick" in which Dr. H. S. Crafts "would say unhesitatingly *I can cure you* and have never failed to cure Consumption, Catarrh, Scrofula, Dyspepsia and Rheumatism with many other forms of diseases". This is followed by a testimonial from a patient admitting a cure of an internal abscess of twelve years' standing.

So from the start success attended the first of her students to go into practice. Yet success did not prevent clouds from gathering in the Crafts household. Mrs. Crafts is said to have grown jealous of the influence that Mrs. Patterson exercised upon her husband and to have felt hurt that in the evenings, when he returned from his work, they were closeted together discussing "philosophy" whilst she was excluded.

On the other hand, Mrs. Patterson, as the Crafts family assert, tried to estrange Hiram from his wife, urging him to divorce her since "she stood in the way of their success in the healing business". One thing is clear, that feeling ran high and this brought to an end the partnership between teacher and pupil.

9

Mary Baker's courage was always magnificent and needed no alimentation from outside. But the Crafts episode must have helped to add to her self-confidence which she never needed more than at this time when, without means or friends, she drifted from one little Massachusetts town to another, living with whomsoever she could, but always working away at the manuscripts which had begun to grow under her hand since her second visit to Quimby, in 1864.

In healing lay the clue—but the key which she meant to find did much more than heal. It is easy to be misled by the apparent emphasis which this remarkable woman laid on one side of her system, an emphasis resulting from various causes, one being her own ill-health and another the obvious opportunities faith-healing afforded of making a livelihood. Mary Baker was able and ready to face poverty; she reckoned her cause more than dollars, as the fact that she never herself attempted to practise as a healer proves, though it is clear she could have successfully done so had she wished. But the system she was working out meant much more than an offensive against the diseases that the flesh is heir to. It meant the re-establishment of the Bible as the foundation of all truth and the routing of the scientists, such as Tyndall and Huxley—atheists who denied the truth of the Word; it meant the reconciliation of religion and science, the antinomy between which baffled the best brains of New, as of Old, England—with the exception of Herbert Spencer. It is too much to suppose that Mary Baker yet realized all the implications that

success would bring in its train. But the ambition was there, and she had the self-restraint to look beyond the present and to sacrifice it to the future.

One thing was certain, she must achieve her object alone and unaided. During her stay at the Crafts she had paid a visit to Tilton, but her family refused to listen to her revelation and even took offence at it. Christian Science hagiology relates how she cured her niece Ellen, the daughter of her sister Martha, who lay in bed suffering from an abscess. The doctor ordered her complete rest and quiet, but her aunt had not been long in the sick-room when she emerged with the patient fully dressed and determined not to go back to bed, in spite of her family's protests. Was it a miracle? In after life Ellen used to grow "pale with resentment" at the suggestion. But then she had quarrelled with her aunt, towards whom she felt "an antipathy that amounted to a passion". With Abigail, too, Mary definitely broke after this visit. Henceforth she had to labour in the face of the hostility of those nearest to her in blood.

What was the scorn of family and friends compared with the importance of her mission? Wherever she went misunderstanding, ill-feeling, calumny, or derision seemed to spring up, yet nothing prevented her from continuing to talk about the truth she now perceived. "Quimby's Science"—affidavits of various persons show her still regarding herself as the expounder of his system. Hardly taking thought how or where she should live, she concentrated on what had become her life. Mary Baker's arrival at the house of a Mrs. Webster, an elderly lady interested in spiritualism, is vividly portrayed by her granddaughter, in an affidavit relating to this time:

> One night in the Autumn of 1867, as nearly as I can fix the date, a woman, a stranger, came to my grandmother's door and told her that she had been led by the spirits to come to her house, for the reason that it was a "nice, harmonious

home". My grandmother, who was sympathetic and hospitable and, above all, a devoted spiritualist, who would never turn another spiritualist away, upon hearing this exclaimed: "Glory to God! Come right in."

There during the winter and well into the following summer, she worked indefatigably at her writings, with no encouragement save what she could find in her own iron will. Wrestling with the difficulties of giving a philosophic presentment to the attack on materialism (and she had no natural gift of self-expression), she covered sheets of paper only to tear them up because they "would not read as she wished". When finally she left the Webster's, late at night after a fracas, she found a home with a poor gentlewoman of Amesbury, a Miss Bagley, who kept a shop and eked out her living by taking in needlework. Mary Baker soon taught her how to heal; Miss Bagley shut up her shop, did no more sewing and found such unexpected prosperity that she was finally able to retire and pass the last ten years of her life in comfort. With this friend of Whittier Mary Baker remained on good terms for some years, though their friendship ceased when she refused to adopt Christian Science and thus avowed herself a "mesmerist".

So this strange Odyssey continued, amidst homely people ready to welcome any excitement into their drab lives, for Mrs. Glover—as she now again called herself—was anything but drab. Her stately manners, her careful, rather mincing speech, that sprouted with odd words and pronunciations—she said "pairson" for person and called pleasure "plaisure"—never failed to attract attention, though attention might sometimes be indistinguishable from ridicule. She differed from others, and so anything might be expected of her. The two young women of Amesbury who waited to see her walk upon the river were not much more credulous than New Englanders in general. Local reputations rest largely upon oddities of personal

character. These, set off by the whispers that she was writing another Bible and was "almost through Genesis", were sufficient to stamp her individuality upon the neighbourhood. To the people immediately around her she managed to convey something of the same sense of mysterious superiority. She sat for hours alone in her room, emerged for meals at odd times, was gracious and inaccessible by turns. She never failed to set her mark upon the household where she dwelt, though in the end her missionary zeal charged the domestic atmosphere with currents it could not hold, so that these long-pent-up emotions would be released in storm.

At the Wentworths, whither she now went, the story of the Crafts and Websters repeated itself. Mrs. Wentworth, a kindly, hospitable spiritualist, had first met Mary Baker when she took her consumptive daughter to Hiram Crafts for treatment. Now she invited Mary to live with them and to teach her the science of healing, in which she was already interested. The plan appeared to suit everyone. Mrs. Wentworth studied the Quimby manuscripts, of which she took a copy, and she practised healing, occasionally even attending to her teacher when she suffered from "beliefs". Mary Baker continued to work at her own book, writing with a zeal that even the sceptic must call inspired, so remote did the possibility seem of its ever finding a publisher. And Mrs. Wentworth's daughter Lucy conceived an affection for their guest which Mary Baker reciprocated. But this halcyon weather could not last for ever, and when the break came it left a resentment behind that flared up in a sheaf of affidavits over thirty years later. Indeed, round no period in Mrs. Eddy's career has controversy raged more bitterly, her critics using the Quimby manuscript, of which Mrs. Wentworth's son had the copy made by his mother, to emphasize her indebtedness to the "mesmeric healer"—as the Christian Scientists now describe him—and her apologists pointing out that she only allowed Mrs. Wentworth to make a copy on

the understanding that it should be seen by no third party, so gravely did Mrs. Eddy already doubt the statements it contained, though she had not yet fully realized the sin inherent in massage and clairvoyance.

Amidst these esoteric niceties of faith-healing the layman may easily stumble. The origin of the storm, however, can be traced to a more worldly cause; in a word to Mr. Wentworth. He found his home had undergone a change. His wife thought of little except her healing, and his daughter Lucy showed an even greater devotion than her mother to their guest. Horace Wentworth, the son, alleged that his father turned against Mrs. Glover when he found that she was trying to persuade his wife to go away with her and set up as a healer. Lucy more generously said that her father thought Mrs. Glover absorbed her mother too much and that she was also weaning his daughter from her filial affection, a thing, Lucy adds, she may have unconsciously done. In any case, relations between Mr. Wentworth and Mrs. Glover grew strained. A Mrs. Clapp, whom Mary Baker had employed as a copyist, has gone so far as to assert that once, when Mr. Wentworth was sick, she heard Mrs. Glover, whose room lay immediately overhead, banging with a stick on the floor, and the son Horace declared that she went away secretly, after having cut her feather-bed in pieces, ripped up the matting and tried to set her room on fire. These statements in his affidavit on this matter, substantiated by another from Mrs. Clapp, have been given the lie direct, and seem, in Mark Twain's phrase, greatly exaggerated. They are at least evidence that Mary Baker's stay at the Wentworths generated hatred as well as love.

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But this experience was to be the last of its kind, for Mary Baker had now decided to undertake more organized missionary effort than she had hitherto been able to accomplish within the domestic circle

where she happened to lodge. She felt she must work in a town of a certain size, and Lynn, where her " fall " had occurred four years before, presented itself as the obvious place for imparting her science. Various reasons led her to make up her mind. In the first place, she had completed at least part of her " Bible ", a general statement of her beliefs, of which the germ lay in the Quimby manuscripts, thrown into the catechetical form of question and answer. She named it " The Science of Man " and, no doubt considerably modified, it found a place under the chapter " Recapitulation " in the later editions of " Science and Health ". She copyrighted this in 1870 to protect herself from the possible depredations of unscrupulous students, for she intended to use this manuscript as the basis of her instruction. Mary Baker could plan this return to Lynn with more confidence since she had saved a little money at the Wentworths ; besides the alimony accruing from her husband, there were the fees Mrs. Wentworth had paid for her lessons, so that by the exercise of thrift she had now a modest capital, sufficient at least for her to set up as a teacher.

Another inducement lay in the promise of a young man, a certain Richard Kennedy, whom she had been teaching intermittently for nearly three years and who wished to enter into partnership with her. Mary Baker had great courage and unquenchable self-confidence, but she was a woman and she had not yet overcome her feminine impulse to have someone else to lean upon, an impulse, indeed, she never conquered entirely. There were besides obvious advantages in being associated with a pupil who did all the routine work, including the treatment of patients, especially since previous experience had shown her that such a partnership could ensure a livelihood. Richard Kennedy, a lively, presentable young man, had inherited something of the religious flair of his Welsh progenitors —a good augury for the cause. And since Kennedy was a bachelor, no marital influence could intervene betwixt teacher and pupil, as it had done in the case

of Hiram Crafts and Mrs. Wentworth. For more than ever Mary Baker had become a woman of a single idea, and anyone who meant to work with her must follow that same idea, assisted and governed by loyalty to her as Leader. A satisfactory arrangement was made, and in the spring of 1870 the two moved together to Lynn from Amesbury, where she had been spending the winter with Sarah Bagley. Kennedy hunted about for suitable quarters and soon found them on the first floor of a building rented by a schoolmistress, Susie Magoun, who used the ground floor for class-rooms and lived herself on the second. A sign was hung outside indicating that "Dr." Kennedy received patients and the cards of "Mary B. Glover, Teacher of Moral Science" let it be known that she took pupils.

The response came at once. The sick flocked to Kennedy and Mary Baker gathered a class round her consisting mainly of workers in the Lynn shoe factories. These earnest young operatives met in the summer evenings and listened spell-bound to the words that dropped from their teacher's lips. She disclosed to them the secrets she had discovered—secrets at once vague and grand—of the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of God (*omni*, she explained, being adapted from the Latin adjective signifying *all*) who was divine Principle, one Life, one Truth, one Love. They learnt that Mind was All-in-All, that sensationless matter had no real existence; they were told pain existed only in mortal mind. Even death, she assured them, was an illusion which could not prevail against Mind Science. It was impressive and wonderful, and all the more so for being based on the Bible, which in itself appealed to their innate Protestantism. But most wonderful of all seemed their teacher, the middle-aged woman who spoke high words with all the authority of enthusiasm and erudition, enhanced by age and breeding. Few failed to react to her influence. She appeared to change the world for them —to the more impressionable, indeed, she became their world, and everything which happened outside

their class-room took on that unreality which she attributed to matter. Besides this fervour of emotion they gained, too, a sense of power. Sickness, disease, even death should flee before them—there seemed no limit to the not ignoble dreams of these manual workers who passed laborious days amidst the hard environment of American factory life sixty years ago.

Dreams flattering in themselves, they promised also a means of escape from the drabness of their lives. For when the course of a dozen lectures had been duly completed and they had transcribed portions of the famous manuscript, Mary Baker would shake them by the hand, address them as "Doctor" and they were ready to follow the example of Richard Kennedy whose flourishing practice lay under their eyes. The course seemed cheap at one hundred dollars, plus ten per cent. of their future earnings as healers—a thousand dollar forfeit if they did not practise acting as a spur to the diffident. Too cheap, indeed, and in a very few weeks Mary Baker raised her fee to three hundred dollars, an increase which, though made with trepidation, proved fully justified. In retrospect she referred to it thus:

> When God impelled me to set a price on my instruction in Christian Science Mind-healing, I could think of no financial equivalent for an impartation of a knowledge of that divine power which heals; but I was led to name three hundred dollars as the price for each pupil in one course of lessons at my College—a startling sum for tuition lasting barely three weeks. This amount greatly troubled me. I shrank from asking it, but was finally led, by a strange providence, to accept this fee.

God, as she observed, had since shown her in multitudinous ways the wisdom of this decision. So, in another of His many manifestations to man, did God show Teresa the essential godliness of poverty—leaving pundits to explain the inconsistency.

Yet the Science of Mind-healing which she thus imparted in twelve lessons, a science having its source in the Bible and uniting in its course the waters of theology, philosophy and therapeutics, proved beyond the grasp of not a few students. A particularly egregious example was one George Tuttle, a seaman who had recently returned from a voyage to the Indies. He joined the class at the request of his sister, a patient of Kennedy's, but he understood "nothing at all". Yet so potent was his simplicity that on his first attempt to "grapple with Mind-science" he cured a girl of the dropsy, only to be so frightened that he foreswore it ever afterwards. The husband of Tuttle's sister, Stanley by name, on the other hand proved disloyal not from fear but from pride. This young man had been brought up a Baptist and was unable to get the idea of a personal God out of his head. He persisted in questioning his teacher on points of dogmatic theology and showed such a taste for argument that Mary Baker had to dismiss him. A third, Wallace W. Wright, who worked in a bank, was better educated than most and, after taking his course satisfactorily, proceeded to practise. Like the other faith-healers he found no difficulty in making a living, but, withdrawn from his teacher's influence, he began, whilst in far-off Tennessee, to question the principles on which he worked. These doubts first caused him to lose his healing power and then led to the conviction that he was a mesmerist. In doubt and poverty he returned to Lynn and asked for his money back. Meeting with a refusal he started a controversy in the Lynn paper and ended by publicly challenging Mary Baker on six counts, the first two of which were that she should raise someone from the dead and walk over water, both of which this disgruntled pupil alleged she had claimed to be able to do.

Disloyal or stupid students, however, had no power to turn Mary Baker from the course she saw ever more clearly in front of her. Prosperity had come, for in eighteen months her share of the partnership

with Kennedy was nearly six thousand dollars. But it only made her more impatient of the trivialities of worldly success. Her vision looked beyond the moment, beyond the practice of mind-healing, to the establishment of something universal, of a new Church. On Sundays she attended the Unitarian place of worship, with Kennedy and Susie Magoun. It must have been already clear to her that she could offer a wider faith than the narrow tenets of Unitarianism. "Richard, you will live to hear the church-bells ring out my birthday," she said to him one Christmas with prophetic insight. But Kennedy's ideals ran on a lower plane. He did the work that came to hand and for the rest liked to amuse himself, finding here an ally in Miss Magoun who felt no more desire than he "to accept the austerities of Christian Science".

In the absence of any such obedience as Catholicism exacts from its religious Mary Baker could not prevent her pupil from dissipating his energies in social distractions, and after a party on Thanksgiving, in 1871, a scene occurred between them which made a break inevitable. The story, as gathered from a Kennedy source, states that he played a hand of cards against her and she, chagrined at his winning, accused him on their return home of cheating. In reply Kennedy is said to have taken their contract, torn it up and thrown it in the fire. Whatever the truth of these personalia, it is clear that about this time Mary Baker began to realize that Kennedy was only a mesmerist and consequently disassociated herself from so deadly a partner. He healed by rubbing the head; that was the only part of her system he had managed to learn, for the "principle of healing by soul-power" he had never grasped. Later, Kennedy admitted as much in the witness-box. "She gave me", he said, "a great deal of instruction of the so-called principle, but I have never been able to understand it." Thus, after a little less than two years, Kennedy, the pupil to whom she had disclosed more of her faith than she had to any other, proved wanting, either because he could

not, or would not, understand her teaching. Mary Baker had no doubt which and her horror of the mesmerist Kennedy remained with her to the end, colouring all her subsequent teaching. Kennedy started a whole train of dark fears which paid the tribute of ignorance to the phenomena that surround us. It explained every untoward happening as being the work of malicious animal magnetism and gave a new name to the age-long belief in necromancy or witchcraft. Kennedy, indeed, presented to the new faith the essential contradiction without which no religion can stand. Evil might be an illusion and love the sole directive force of the human soul. But malicious animal magnetism—M.A.M. as it came to be known—was the emanation of evil, and Richard Kennedy was its impersonation. In a word, he filled the familiar rôle of Devil in the Christian Science cosmogony.

If some students broke away—in 1872 one sued and got her money back—Mary Baker's power over the others was absolute. They had only one interest, only one subject of conversation; they were attentive in the small but important details of life and their loyalty responded to the severest trials. Those who were married submitted their children to her healing—one student is recorded to have lost three in this fashion—and the unmarried changed their state at her behest. And when, finally, the book at which she had been labouring for years was ready for the publishers, and none could be found to undertake the apparently certain loss, two students subscribed the thousand dollars necessary to guarantee the cost of printing. Not that Mary Baker was any longer the propertyless widow of former years. That very year of 1875, which in the autumn saw the publication of the first edition of "Science and Health", she had bought a house, the "Little House in Broad Street", which still remains in its modest simplicity a memorial of the early days of the new religion. There in a garret—for lodgers occupied the first floor rooms—which had a skylight in the sloping roof for its sole window, she

put the finishing touches to her book. Into this room no one else was allowed to go. To its seclusion she could withdraw out of the reach of followers who sometimes got on her nerves. Its bareness reflected the austerity of her purpose. The only luxury it afforded was a rocking chair, for oscillation still remained the one sensuous pleasure that had any appeal for her. This cottage, built of wood and possessing something of the traditional attractiveness of New England's domestic architecture, continued the centre of the movement until in the following decade she moved into Boston and launched her ark on the wider waters of New England's social and intellectual capital.

II

Her new home, though it enabled her to escape contact with sceptics and scoffers, did not shield her from the storms which continually raged round the young faith. God in this had revealed Himself as All-wise and All-loving, but the Devil, though strictly speaking an illusion, had not less signally proved in the form of malicious animal magnetism a subtle, insidious, unscrupulous foe. As she thought of the awful power of mesmerism which Kennedy was exerting in the same town—and exerting against her—it seemed that the issue between light and darkness had been joined in Lynn, and that she must do everything possible to prevent men and women from falling victim to its fell purpose. Kennedy rubbed the head—that she now knew to be mesmerism, and to make its evils plain she decided to add a chapter to "Science and Health", which was already in the printer's hands. Those who read this extraordinary epilogue to an extraordinary book will understand something of Mary Baker's passionate self-confidence. No Pope ever thundered against the heresies of his enemies as did Mary Baker against the manipulation which Richard Kennedy practised. "Our rebuke to a false statement elicited his revenge and through this we discovered the mal-

practice we oppose. We have seen manipulating the head form a habit more pernicious than opium-eating." " Since witnessing the evil one student did in the name of science, we have utterly objected to students rubbing the head. The malpractitioner's sin standeth 'in holy places' ". It was " criminal outlawry ", " Satan let loose ".

The fear of mesmerism helped to inspire the resolutions passed by a meeting held in the summer of this same year at which the first provision for organized Sunday worship was made by the votaries of the " Science of Mind ". One of the reasons given therein for the holding of Sabbath meetings was that " by the wicked and wilful disobedience of an individual, who has no name in Love, Wisdom, or Truth, the light was obscured by clouds of misrepresentations and mists of mystery, so that God's work was hidden from the world and derided in the streets ". The most active disciple in taking this step towards the creation of a Christian Science Church was Daniel Spofford, a shoemaker whom Mary Baker had recently accepted as a free pupil, remitting his fee as she did when circumstances warranted this privilege. His signature with seven others to the document which condemns Kennedy without naming him has a certain piquancy from the fact that Spofford, too, was soon to be classed amongst those who had betrayed the faith. So it came about that hate entered into the house in Broad Street in the train of love, and fear trod close upon the heels of hope.

" Science and Health ", which first saw the light that autumn, began its career in a way to belie its future circulation. The public of New England ignored this bold attempt to make the devouring lion of science lie down with the lamb of religion. Yet there could be no doubt of the authoress's intention, which is stated in the first paragraph of the first chapter, its text being a newspaper clipping referring to a prize of £100 offered by the University of Oxford for an essay " to refute the materialism of the present age, or the tendency

to attribute physical effects to physical causes, rather than to a final spiritual cause ". Arguing from inversion—if good is real, evil must be unreal: if life is divine mind, death must be an illusion—it proceeded to join science and religion in a splendid union based upon a spiritual interpretation of the Bible. " Materialism " was routed by giving it the lie direct ; for Mary Baker, scrutinizing it through the lenses of her divine science, declared simply that matter did not exist. It was " Illusion "—" that which mortal mind sees, feels, hears, tastes and smells only in belief "—" sensation in the sensationless ". Clearly Truth could not be learned through the laws which governed this " mythology ". On the other hand, if properly looked at " the science of the Bible was manifest from Genesis to Revelation " and Jesus Christ appeared as " the most scientific man of whom we have any record ".

Mary Baker's doctrines had their roots in the Bible cult of Protestantism, yet she offered a direct challenge to the traditional and conventional parties in either camp. The sciences, anatomy, physiology, phrenology, psychology, theology, doctrines, opinions, beliefs—" all the -ologies and -isms "—were condemned. For the sciences are branches of knowledge and " knowledge is obtained from false premises, from personal sense, that affords only the mortal evidences of man, presupposing Soul's audience-chamber the brain, falsely claiming the prerogatives of Intelligence, God ". She trained her artillery on the scientists and left them no cover where they might escape the devastation of her argument. But she treated them courteously. She regretted that Professor Agassiz had not gained " the scientific statement of being ", since his discoveries brought to light important points in what she termed " embryotic life ; the butterfly, bee, etc., propagating their species without the male element ; and this corroborates science, proving plainly that the origin of the universe and man depends not on material conditions ". After all, she asks, " what availeth it to investigate this so-called life, that starts in dust, or an

egg" and ends in dust. That was Darwin's mistake in holding that our species "comes up through all the lower grades of being and must be a monkey before he is a man. Mr. Darwin is right with regard to mortal man, or matter, but should have made a distinction between these and the immortal, whose basis is Spirit. Animality produces animals."

It all depended on belief. "Should universal mind, or belief, adopt the appearing of a star as the formula of creation, the advent of mortal man would commence with a star." Euripides made Hippolytus, the woman-hater, regret that men were not propagated like the trees. Mary Baker, though feminist to the core, was yet bound by her revelation to condemn physiology which she called anti-Christian. "Physiology is like fiction in which debauchery is toned down to fascinate and mankind are in danger of catching its sentiment." The delicate subject of the reproduction of the species she touched upon lightly:

> The belief regarding the origin of mortal man has changed since Adam produced Eve, and the only reason a rib is not the present mode of evolution, is because of this change, and more mortal opinions to contend against now, than when error first said, "Believe in me." Conditions of matter are conditions of mind instead, therefore the supposed conditions become imperative as mind only. . . . When mortal mind says an egg produces man, this condition becomes as fixed and imperative as the original one of a rib.

It was, perhaps, a little confusing and hard to state clearly, but error would continue for 7000 years from the time of Adam, its origin. And if natural history said that man traced his descent from monkeys, material reasoning might prove that he would return to the simian condition, a pleasant *reductio ad absurdum*:

> . . . theorizing from mushrooms up to brains amounts to little in the right direction, and much

> in the wrong. Classifying the different species of man, mineral, vegetable and animal, an egg is the author of the genus homo ; but we perceive no reason why man should begin thus sooner than in the more primitive state of dust where Adam commenced. Brains are beneath the cranium of animals ; then to admit brains are man furnishes a pretext for saying he was once a monkey, which is met with the reply, if this be the case, he will again be one, according to natural history.

Certainly all this was difficult to understand for those who allowed themselves to be bemused by the operations of natural law. Yet " if man would believe that matter has no sensation then the human limb would be replaced as readily as the lobster's claw ". It mattered nothing what one ate—though Mary Baker did not say the same of what one drank. Obesity was only " an adipose belief of yourself as substance ". Neither should one worry about hygiene :

> The daily ablutions of an infant are no more natural or necessary than would be the taking a fish out of water every day and covering it with dirt in order to make it thrive more vigorously thereafter in its native element.

But if doctors of medicine and their materia medica receive short shrift, she had little more patience with theologians and their dogmas. Her own revelation made all the others obsolete and she described the Trinity as an error, for " that three persons are united in one body suggests a heathen deity more than Jehovah ". Thus trenchantly she clove through the central dogma of Christianity, fashioned and elaborated by the subtle wit of Hellenism. Yet so deeply is the mystic virtue of trinity implanted in western thought that she did not altogether discard it, for Love, Truth and Life constitute in the Science of Being " the triune principle of man and the universe ". And then from polemics she would turn to prophecy and foretell the

radio: "The electric telegraph is a symbol of mind speaking to mind that in progress of time will not require wires," which would come about through "spirit destroying matter, electricity, etc."

"Science and Health" was an extraordinary book and it cannot be judged by ordinary standards. As one of Mrs. Eddy's followers has written, "only the simple seeker after truth can appreciate its literary qualities of style and diction. A materialistic tendency of mind incapacitates any critic to pass judgment upon Mrs. Eddy's writings." And another has declared that "as a great work of art it may be said to have set up a new criterion of art". Yet one cannot help having some sympathy for George Tuttle and Richard Kennedy and the others who failed to comprehend the things set out in language as strange as the road along which they were expected to lead their untutored minds. Mary Baker, however, with her life work still to do, could not afford any sentimental feelings and when George Barry, her favourite student, failed to sell the book she felt he was to blame. Barry was not only a zealous follower and particularly devoted to his leader; he was one of the pair who between them had advanced the money for its publication and his religious enthusiasm should have been strengthened by personal interest. As the public showed no signs of buying it, Barry peddled the book from door to door without very much success. Its authoress, undeterred by the disappointment of seeing the work of nine years treated with this neglect, allowed her pen no rest and started at once on a revision, or a continuation, which should elucidate the obscurer portions of the former volume, especially that dealing with the question of mesmerism.

For this, thanks to her ill-health, had come to take a paramount place in her thoughts, since she herself had suffered from its malicious influence. She felt that the minds of others were being directed against her own, a thing done wilfully in the case of the apostate Kennedy, but yet almost as harmfully, if uncon-

sciously, by her own students. It arose out of the conflict of personalities (as it has been called by later generations of Christian Scientists) in those immediately around her, a clash which had begun soon after the advent of Asa Gilbert Eddy as a student. A quiet, unassuming little man, he at once won the regard of his teacher. Alone of her pupils he was allowed to call her Mary and the high favour in which he stood became apparent to all. Neither Spofford, who it has been hinted felt more than a student's regard for Mary Baker, nor Barry, whom the others had considered as standing to her in a semi-filial relationship, were pleased at the intrusion. When Mary Baker took from Barry the task of selling " Science and Health " and entrusted it to Spofford, ordering Spofford at the same time to hand over to Eddy the lucrative practice he had managed to establish, both were grieved. Barry sulked and kept away from the Christian Science Home ; the more idealistic Spofford obeyed his leader's command, but could not hide his chagrin at the influences trying to estrange him from her. And the women students eagerly canvassed the pros and the cons, siding with Spofford or Eddy according to their feminine predilections.

Mary Baker reacted acutely to this division. She felt uncertain what to do. Someone to lean upon, or rather someone to shield her from the forces of darkness around her, that was what she wanted. Should she marry Gilbert Eddy ? It would estrange Spofford. On the other hand, Spofford was responsible in great measures for the hysteria and insomnia to which her nerves had brought her. She suffered and appeared to be ill ; not, she explained, from the normal bodily ailments, but for, or from, the sins of others. At length she became so overwrought that she wrote to him who was her most intelligent pupil : " Now, Dr. Spofford, won't you exercise reason and let me live or will you kill me ? Your mind is just what has brought on my relapse and I shall never recover if you do not govern yourself and turn your thoughts

wholly away from me. . . . I was never worse than last night and you say you wish to do me good and I do not doubt it. It is a hidden foe that is at work, read 'Science and Health', p. 193." She continued in a still higher key: "Dr. Eddy has tried to have you say you are in a *mistake*, it is *God* and not man that has separated us and for the reasons I *begin* to learn. . . . It is mesmerism that I feel and is killing me, it is mortal mind that can only make me suffer. Now stop thinking of me or you will cut me off *soon* from the face of earth."

Spofford, who yielded to none in his admiration for their leader, was given however a more material task to perform. For, two days later, Gilbert Eddy brought him a note from her beginning "Dear Student", and signed "Your Teacher", saying that for reasons best known to herself she had changed her views about marrying and asking him to hand the letter she had enclosed to the Unitarian clergyman, and be pleased to wait for the answer. Spofford looked at the marriage licence which Eddy produced, whereon bride and bridegroom were both stated to be forty years of age —"Never record ages," said Mrs. Eddy, in her womanly version of Truth; "timetables of births and deaths are conspiracies against the fresh faculties and beauty of manhood and womanhood"—and remarked: "You've been very quiet about all this, Gilbert." "Indeed, Dr. Spofford," was the answer, "I didn't know a thing about it until last night." Thus suddenly was Asa Gilbert Eddy launched at once into matrimony and immortality by giving his name to a woman destined to become famous wherever Anglo-Saxons are gathered together.

12

WHAT Mrs. Eddy later called "a blessed and spiritual union" was not destined to procure her the tranquillity she desired. On the contrary, it heralded the stormiest years of her career, years in which she believed herself

to be the victim of malicious animal magnetism. Sometimes, indeed, it seemed as if she would be unable to hold out against its mysterious agency. George Barry had already openly broken with her and his suit against her for 2700 dollars only emphasized his defection, though the Court's award of 350 dollars did not embarrass her financially. The incident, nevertheless, entailing as it did her appearance as a witness, helped to increase the sense of strain. Her distress showed itself in "beliefs", as illness or indisposition came now to be called in Christian Science phraseology, and she decided to withdraw for the time from Lynn and pursue her work on the next edition of "Science and Health" in Boston. One reason for this was that it enabled her to escape from her students, who continued to increase in numbers and made too many calls on her time. She taught them, but this they did not find enough. They persisted in referring refractory cases of healing to her and in asking her for advice; they would not even leave her mind alone when they were absent from her. Currents of magnetism interrupted her literary labours. So we find her writing to Spofford from Boston: "If the students still continue to think of me and to call on me I shall at last defend myself and this will be to cut them off from me utterly in a spiritual sense by a bridge they cannot pass over." "Cure Miss Brown," she says on another occasion, "or I shall never finish my book," and again: "Direct your thoughts, and everybody's else that you can away from me, don't talk of me. . . ." A third injunction told Spofford to think of her when he felt "*strong* and well only". Other letters, written from Boston in those early days of her married life with Gilbert Eddy, show her to have been on the verge of what, in ordinary parlance, would be called a nervous breakdown.

But in spite of depression and nerves, her faith in her book remained. If the first edition had hung fire, she would retrieve this by the success of her second, at which the indomitable woman continued to labour,

in spite of that dryness which authors share with saints. Money, however, was necessary and this she looked to Spofford to supply from the proceeds of the sale of the first. Here she was disappointed, for during the summer, whilst she still lingered in Boston, he cleared out the remaining stock for 600 dollars and paid over the sum to George Barry and the woman student, Elizabeth Newhall, who, with him, had financed its publication and shared the losses it had entailed. But Mrs. Eddy was none the less furious at what Spofford had done, and henceforth he was added to the number of disloyal students whose presence in Lynn created the mesmeric currents which reacted so severely upon herself. The fact that Spofford, after being cut off, continued, like Kennedy, to practise his faith-healing, seemed a further menace to the new faith, and malicious animal magnetism spread its influence over the house in Broad Street, affecting even inanimate things such as the spoons and pillows which disappeared from the rooms rented by the lodgers.

Christian Science had denied Satan, or it had routed him from pillar to post and yet here he was, the Devil himself, as firmly established as ever. The problem of evil—was it more complicated than she had thought? Was mesmerism merely a matter of manipulation? She had made that the test in Kennedy's case, but here was Spofford who never "manipulated", and yet she felt obliged to call him a "criminal mental marauder". No: mesmerism could not be confined within any such narrow limits; it was "not a trick but a malignant attitude of mind". Thus she adumbrated her attitude in the second edition of "Science and Health". With all the powers of hatred inherited from her Puritan forebears, who had accumulated this poison during the oppression of their creed, Mrs. Eddy reacted like them to what she considered the persecution she endured from disloyal followers, and in this frame of mind prepared her new volume. It is not surprising under the circumstances that it proved a greater failure than the first edition.

The students, under the potent influence of their leader, themselves grew frightened of the sinister forces opposed to them. They met together and " concentrated their thoughts " upon Kennedy and Spofford and Barry, in the hopes that thereby the malice would be drawn from the currents of mortal mind directed against them. Mrs. Eddy did not attend, possibly she did not countenance, such meetings. But they sprang from the violence of her own views, and her impressionable and ignorant followers, terrified by these manifestations of " the Carnal mind " of the Devil, minus his horns and hoofs but no less a Devil for all that, cannot be blamed for the epidemic of fear that made them shake like aspen leaves in summer airs.

This panic culminated when the ailing Miss Lucretia Brown, a neat little woman who did crochet work and who had previously given Mrs. Eddy a good deal of trouble by her " beliefs ", brought an action against Spofford for having practised mesmerism upon her and others, using " his power and art for the purpose of injuring the persons and properties and social relations of others ". The " Ipswich Witchcraft Case ", as it has been called, was argued for the prosecution by one of Mrs. Eddy's students, one Edward J. Arens, who after the fall of Spofford acted as chief of her disciples. This attempt to revive the belief in witchcraft and to exact punishment for its practice from the civil power failed, the Judge deciding that the Court had no power to control Spofford's mind. It is said to have been begun without Mrs. Eddy's sanction, but in view of the fact that she was present in court with her students when the case was tried in the spring of 1878, she cannot altogether escape the responsibility from which her followers would like to absolve her.

Whilst the energetic Arens acted as her factotum during that summer, many other lawsuits occupied the attention of the students and afforded copy to the local papers. It was then that Stanley and George Tuttle were sued, unsuccessfully indeed, since both said

that they had been confused through Mrs. Eddy teaching them first to manipulate the head and afterwards not to touch the patient. A suit against Kennedy for 1000 dollars on account of royalties on patients' fees, on the other hand, was successful, but a similar claim failed against Spofford, who had been taken as a free pupil on the usual condition of subsequent commission on his earnings as a practitioner. Never was a young faith so involved with processes of Law, yet Mrs. Eddy has put it on record that "in the interests of Truth we ought to say that never a lawsuit has entered into our history voluntarily. We have suffered great losses and direct injustice rather than go to Law, for we have always considered a lawsuit of two evils the greater."

Voluntarily—the qualification is important. For during that extraordinary year of 1878 the little community was so beset by fear that the ordinary processes of reasoning were inhibited. Malicious animal magnetism haunted them. Mr. Eddy, never very courageous, declared that Spofford's mind was on their track day and night and he doubtless felt no easier about it since he knew that he was the cause of the estrangement between Spofford and his former teacher and leader. As Mrs. Eddy walked the floor at night, a prey to that insomnia which haunted her throughout life, Asa G. Eddy realized the awful power of mesmerism. He hated the man who thus made their existence miserable, and used to utter pious wishes for his destruction. So, at least, it was afterwards testified by Jessie Macdonald, who acted as their general servant for some months at this period. She had also heard Mrs. Eddy read a chapter from the Old Testament in which it was stated that the wicked should come to destruction. Both husband and wife felt an undisguised fear of Spofford, and the students, sympathizing with their teacher, did their best to ward off the invisible evils of mesmerism by "taking up" Spofford mentally for two hours at a time.

This at any rate had one result, which was to add

to Spofford's alarm. For that mild, idealistic individual was also himself thoroughly frightened. He had been expelled from the Christian Science Association for "immorality" early in the year—but the lawsuit that followed and Mrs. Eddy's letters to the local papers showed that she wished to stamp him as a malpractitioner and to drive him from Lynn. He was faced with the prospect of losing his patients, chiefly to Arens who had become Mrs. Eddy's favourite disciple. What else Mrs. Eddy's followers might be meditating against him he did not know. He knew that they were treating him mentally—suppose that treatment became physical as well? His state was made worse by the fact that he still regarded Mrs. Eddy with awe and wonder and considered "Science and Health" the greatest book ever written—after the Bible.

In this atmosphere of mutual fear and overwrought nerves occurred the most sensational of all the cases in which the early Christian Science Church found itself implicated. Spofford on October 15 left his home in Lynn and failed to return. His disappearance aroused the anxiety of his friends; the *Boston Herald* advertised for him as missing; a few days later the same paper asserted that his body had been identified at the mortuary; and on October 29 Edward Arens and Asa G. Eddy were arrested for having conspired to murder him. In the meantime Spofford had returned home safe and sound after a fortnight's absence. The details of the story are as amazing as any that ever placed that overworked adjective on the posters of the evening papers. Some time before, Spofford had received a visit from a man called Sergeant, a rough customer who belonged to the underworld of Boston. Spofford was astonished to see such a person come to his clinic, but he soon learnt that he had not come in search of faith-healing. For Sergeant told Spofford that two men, whom he asserted to be Arens and Eddy, had offered him 500 dollars if he would intercept Spofford on a lonely stretch of road and

" lick him so that he wouldn't come to again ". Sergeant explained that he had already reported the matter to a state detective, one Pinkham. To Pinkham, thereupon, Spofford went. Pinkham however knew nothing about it and was disinclined to believe the story of the ex-convict, Sergeant. Spofford became even more alarmed when, on October 9, he received a letter from Mrs. Eddy, the first for seventeen months. " Dear Student," it began, " won't you make up your mind before it is forever too late to stop sinning with your eyes wide open ? " and it continued in the same strain. Spofford's nerves were already on edge. The receipt of this missive, with its ominous hint that it would soon be too late for him to repent, frightened him still more. It seemed to show no desire on Mrs. Eddy's part for his recantation and return to the fold, but rather to corroborate Sergeant's story. Mrs. Eddy, Spofford believed, had written the letter to avert possible suspicion after his murder.

When Sergeant called a second time he found a thoroughly terrified man who was only too ready to believe the story that Arens and Eddy, known to Sergeant as " Miller " and " Libbey ", were pressing him to complete his part of the bargain and murder Spofford. Sergeant, whose truculent exterior apparently concealed a certain kindness of heart, explained to Spofford that he did not wish to do him any harm but that the money promised by Arens would be an agreeable addition to his earnings as a bar-tender, and he suggested that Spofford should go with him to his sister-in-law's house at Cambridgeport where he could remain in hiding until Sergeant had encashed the blood money. Spofford listened, but his gentle nature gave him no clue as to the answer such an extraordinary proposal demanded. In his doubt he went again to Pinkham. History does not record what was Pinkham's advice. Anyhow Spofford did the oddest thing possible for a frightened man and agreed to entrust his person to the very man who, he believed, had been offered money to kill him.

Secretly he went off with the burly ex-convict, and was driven in a buggy to his sister's over the very road whereon the crime should have been committed. In that retreat Spofford lay hid, "making merry with Sergeant's friends—a man considered one of the lowest villains in Boston", as Mrs. Eddy wrote in the third edition of "Science and Health" where this case helps to swell the chapter on Demonology. Thence Spofford emerged after a fortnight, without in fact having seen Sergeant in the meantime, and went quietly home.

This tame conclusion to a curious adventure was followed a week later by the Police Court, or in American parlance Municipal Court, proceedings against the two accused, who surrendered to their 3000 dollars bail. The chief witness for the prosecution was, of course, Sergeant, who repeated the story he had already told Spofford that "Miller" and "Libbey" had offered him 500 dollars if he would commit the murder, adding that he had seen them both after Spofford's disappearance. He asserted that Arens had accepted his assurances of Spofford having been murdered. But though Arens boasted that he "could tell such things" in a way other people knew nothing of, he had only, in spite of this inward prompting, paid over 20 dollars instead of the 500 agreed upon. If Sergeant was a tainted witness, whose word was worthless, the others were little better. Laura Sergeant, who kept a brothel, gave evidence that Arens had visited her brother several times at her establishment, being corroborated in this by several of her women who appeared in court dressed in their finery and obviously enjoying the change of scene and the importance attaching to their rôle as witnesses for the Commonwealth. Pinkham, supported by the testimony of a colleague, deposed to having seen Sergeant in conversation with Arens and also "going towards the door" of Mr. Eddy's house. Jessie Macdonald, the Eddy's ex-servant, testified to the threats which she had heard Mr. Eddy utter against Spofford, and a man called Collier, like Sergeant a member of the

criminal classes, stated that he had heard Arens offer money to Sergeant if he would murder Spofford.

The magistrate could not have been much impressed with the evidence of the prosecution, but he must have considered there was a prima-facie case, for he committed for trial both the accused, who reserved their defence, allowing them bail in 3000 dollars each as before. When the case came up before the Superior Court in December the grand jury found a true bill, but after it had been transferred to the January sessions, the District Attorney entered a *nolle prosequi* and both the accused were discharged on payment of costs. So the case was never threshed out, and though Mrs. Eddy, in her anxiety to clear her husband's memory, subsequently obtained a number of affidavits from various witnesses, including one from Collier admitting that he had committed perjury, its mysterious ramifications defy elucidation. Probably we shall never know the chain of events which brought Sergeant and the underworld of Boston into contact in this dramatic fashion with a young movement that was nothing if not genteel. Mrs. Eddy's view that Kennedy planned and Spofford acquiesced in a plot to ruin her and her work is untenable. The characters of the two protagonists forbid it, even could any sufficient motive have prompted Kennedy to so dangerous an intrigue, for Kennedy had a flourishing practice and had never had any reason to regret his cleavage from Mrs. Eddy whom he never ceased to regard with indulgence in spite of her openly expressed hostility. Arens, of Prussian extraction, was an unscrupulous and restless character—" an ignorant hypocrite " was how Mrs. Eddy described him later—but even if he broached the subject to Sergeant it is hard to believe that Asa Eddy, whose timidity was notorious, would have allowed himself to be drawn into such a business. On the other hand, if Sergeant was a mere blackmailer why did he not attempt to extract money from Spofford, as he might easily have done ?

Mrs. Eddy, however, had no doubts. She knew the powers of malicious animal magnetism, and the coincidence that the charge against her husband was preferred at the very time that the second edition of "Science and Health" appeared seemed to her conclusive. The affair was "one of those extraordinary incidents of moral idiocy which malicious magnetism is credited with producing when unresisted". So she described it. And upon the complete failure of the second edition, she set to work at once with unquenchable courage to prepare the third. But Mr. Eddy remained "stupefied with fear".

13

THAT stormy year, ending with such serious scandal for the Christian Scientists, though it brought Mrs. Eddy's fortunes temporarily to a low ebb, proved the harbinger of better things. Feeling in Lynn had been roused against her by her feud with Kennedy and Spofford, and at a time when litigation had diminished her resources she found herself with very few pupils. In spite of the falling off in her classes, due to the mesmerists who would not even allow her to keep a servant, her confidence in her own powers remained unabated. The mornings she kept for her literary labours, spending long hours in her garret study wrestling with the intractable medium of words, setting out Truth—that Truth which the world had so hedged around with error that it even invaded her grammar. If she had to scrub the stairs of an afternoon, she made light of it, declaring that the change of occupation did her good. It was at this time that she worked the miracle of making the apple tree blossom in January when the snow lay upon the ground, "and in Lynn demonstrated in the Floral line some such small things", as she herself wrote some twenty years later. For the influence of her personality extended to the vegetable world. When she stayed at home the flowers and plants could live without sun or water,

and if in her absence they drooped she had only to treat them mentally on her return for them to recover their freshness. Sometimes it pleased her to relate such anecdotes to her students, and then she might suddenly change the subject and repeat with enjoyment how a critic had said that no one but a madman or a woman could have written " Science and Health ".

Not that she ever relaxed for more than a moment. Soon she was to draw followers from the more cultured society of Boston, women who were on nodding terms with the Arts and liked to turn the conversation in such directions. Some of these found her entire concentration on Christian Science more than they could stand, and left her. Their defection did not shake Mrs. Eddy, and her only answer to such gestures of disloyalty was to deplore the power of mesmerism and to concentrate more closely than before on Christian Science. For she explained that Christian Science was also an art, and that should be enough for all true Scientists. " The truest art of Christian Science is to be a Christian Scientist ;—and it demands more than a Raphael to delineate *this* Art."

Already in the summer of that eventful year, 1878, she had begun to give lectures on Sunday afternoons in one of the Boston Baptist Churches. Then she took a public hall where she could develop her own teaching without thought of the doctrinal susceptibilities of other sects. At these meetings Mrs. Eddy's personality, exercising a deeper fascination as it became mellowed by the years, did not fail to impress and attract her audience. She spoke easily, as a rule on the subject of healing, and conveyed to her audience something of the emotional tension to which her students were habitually subjected. Mr. Eddy, a small figure in a black frock-coat, took the bag round and after the meeting explained to the shyer souls who did not venture to encircle Mrs. Eddy, the benefits that were to be got from attending her classes. Never had Mrs. Eddy been so decidedly the leader. Only one thing embarrassed her—she could not read without

glasses. In private she used to explain that she wore them for the sins of the world, for the idea of the scapegoat had at one time attracted her. If she suffered, was ill, transgressed the logic of her own Truth, it was that others might be whole. Had she not felt a desire to smoke when treating her nephew and second husband against tobacco? But she now discarded this theory, and in the third edition of "Science and Health" she definitely disowned it. So, at least, one may infer from her own words: "In years past we suffered greatly for the sick when healing them, but even that is all over now and we cannot suffer for them. But when we did suffer in belief, our joy was so great in removing others' sufferings, that we bore ours cheerfully and willingly. This self-sacrificing love had never left us, but grows stronger every year of our earth life." It was simpler, therefore, to attribute her dependence on spectacles to the efforts of the mesmerists.

The "stubbornness of Lynn" found more than a counterpoise in the widening horizon that Boston afforded—Boston that home of radical religious speculation based upon the Bible; and Mrs. Eddy realized very soon the difference of outlook between the uneducated artisans with whom she had consorted in Lynn and the ladies who belonged to the polite world of the New England metropolis. Foremost amongst these was Mrs. Clara Choate, whose husband belonged to that well-known New England family. Mrs. Choate had read "Science and Health", and wished to meet its authoress. She has put on record her impressions when this ambition was gratified:

> When the double doors leading into the back parlour were at last opened and I saw her standing there, I was seized with a great gladness which seemed to be imparted by her radiant expression. Mrs. Eddy instantly healed me of every ill that claimed me. I cannot describe the exhilaration that rushed through my whole being. I was

> uplifted and felt a sense of buoyancy unspeakable. It was as though a consciousness of purity pervaded Mrs. Eddy and from her imparted itself to me, whereupon I felt as if treading on air to the rhythmic flow of music.

On these buoyant emotions young Mrs. Choate was carried into the inner circle of Mrs. Eddy's neophytes. Her husband at first had been hostile to "Science", but with American uxoriousness he adjusted his views to those of his wife and joined Mrs. Eddy's class. They moved to Lynn and took a house across the street from Mrs. Eddy, who called Clara Choate "child" and allowed her to do the many small duties that a filial affection prompted. Both she and her husband contributed much to the successful establishment of the new faith in Boston. Their intimacy lasted for five years, during which Mrs. Choate remained one of Mrs. Eddy's chief lieutenants. "Disharmony" then arose between them, owing to Mrs. Choate's unwillingness to leave her home in Boston to go to Chicago and found a branch of the growing Church in the capital of the Middle West. But by that time Christian Science had begun to spread far and wide and its purely Bostonian period had come to an end, so that Mrs. Choate's backsliding to mesmerism mattered little.

All this, however, lay in the future. The problem that confronted Mrs. Eddy at the moment was the form Christian Science organization should take. Her own views had hitherto been fluctuating. She had often expressed her determination to have a Church of her own. Yet the Puritan in her, recoiling from the æsthetic appeal that institutional religion almost inevitably makes and distrusting priestcraft, had led her to write: "The soft palm upturned to a lordly salary—making dome and spire tremulous with beauty, that turns the poor and stranger from the gate—shuts the door on Christianity." Impelled by such sentiments she had thought that a Book, fulfilling and explaining the Bible would be sufficient. A closer

knowledge of mankind led her to change her views, and to see that without authority and organization to back it "Science and Health" would have no chance of making its way. The wishes of her followers also lay in the direction of organized worship; this they had been brought up to regard as an integral part of religion and they missed it in their new faith. Already four years before some of the Lynn students, as we have seen, had subscribed together to provide Sabbath meetings under Mrs. Eddy's direction, meetings that had not been altogether successful owing to the stubbornness of the Lynn character which preferred argument to instruction.

Now the trend of events determined Mrs. Eddy to take a definite step in the constitution of the Christian Science body, so far united only in the form of an Association dating from 1876, and in August, 1879, the Church of Christ (Scientist) was formally incorporated under a charter from the State of Massachusetts, and the foundations laid of a religious sect which, in the rigidity of its discipline and the centralization of its organization, has no counterpart. The legal preparations were undertaken with the greatest secrecy, the various officers assembling for the final legal formalities at Charlesport, where the Treasurer, Margaret Dunshee, lived, in order that the mesmerists, so strong in Lynn, might not be able to interfere. Mrs. Eddy was, of course, President and there were eight directors, only one of whom, Miss Dorcas Rawson, had been a signatory of the Resolutions of four years back which had first inaugurated Sabbath meetings. Services at the beginning were held in the houses of one or other of the members, either in Boston or Lynn, and the congregations were only a handful, numbering sometimes not more than six or seven people. In this way the apparently insignificant Church began its corporate life and nothing went to show the immense and rapid growth that the near future had in store. Mrs. Eddy proved an admirable pastor, later on being regularly ordained after the Congregational method of

New England. If her discourses, in the opinion of some, turned too much on the dangers of mesmerism, none denied the power of her personality, or the greatness of Divine Science, which made obsolete all the previously existing creeds.

Yet there was an exception. One of those who came under the immediate influence of that remarkable woman failed to show the usual reactions. That person was George Glover. Mrs. Eddy, desiring to see her son again, had sent him a wire to his home in Minnesota telling him to come to her—and he dutifully obeyed. At the moment she was staying with the Choates in Boston and there this simple-minded, burly, middle-aged man, whom his mother had not seen since he was a child, joined her. She spoke to him of Christian Science and he understood nothing, but when she told him of mesmerism and malicious animal magnetism he understood enough to know that Kennedy was obnoxious to his parent and according to his own account visited Kennedy's offices and there at the revolver point told him to stop his " black-art tricks ". These rough and ready cowboy methods showed filial piety, but they showed, too, that George would never make a student in Science, and he soon departed for his prairie home. He had learnt one thing, however —that his mother was a woman of importance and he was to put this knowledge to personal advantage later on.

This lay at that time below the horizon, beyond even his mother's far-sighted vision. She only knew that she was beginning to be recognized, a fact which impelled her to work harder than ever at the third edition of " Science and Health " with which she felt success was bound up. Mr. Eddy, with no acute vision but very acute fears, continued to be not less fearful than before of the dangers of malicious animal magnetism. When walking along the street with a brother Scientist he would suddenly dodge into a doorway and pull his companion with him, explaining that only thus could they escape the mesmeric currents

around them. When he went abroad he never raised his voice above a whisper, and he would continually glance back over his shoulder to see what danger threatened. A pathetic little man, but also rather trying, as Mrs. Eddy herself, according to a disciple who then boarded with them in Broad Street, sometimes found. Then she would grow impatient with her husband's " semi-somnambulant condition of fear," and the quiet Asa Gilbert, to whom his wife was as a Deity, is once reported to have remarked to the same disciple, in a moment of confidence and discouragement, that he did not believe God Almighty could please Mrs. Eddy.

Christian Science had not been for him a gospel of peace. First Spofford, and now Arens, had turned against his wife, and he felt it acutely. For Arens, after the conspiracy to murder case, had removed to Boston, ostensibly to work for the cause, but in reality to wrest its leadership from Mrs. Eddy. At first she did not suspect this, and for some months their relations remained friendly. But when Arens, following in his leader's literary footsteps brought out a pamphlet entitled, " Theology, or the Understanding of God as applied to Healing the Sick ", in which he appropriated whole paragraphs and pages from " Science and Health ", acknowledging his indebtedness by saying that he had " made use of some thoughts contained in a work by Eddy ", it became clear that Arens was as disloyal as the other once favoured students, Kennedy and Spofford. His photograph, marked with a cross, was placed beside those on Mrs. Eddy's writing table, though the primacy of Kennedy as Prince of Mesmerists was indicated by his cross being in red. " Fellow ", " metaphysical mouse ", " ignorant hypocrite " are some of the terms applied by Asa Eddy to his former associate in the Preface he wrote to the third edition of " Science and Health ", which came out in 1881. That Mrs. Eddy and her husband were not alone in recognizing the dangers of mesmerism is shown by the statement, following his preface, signed

by over thirty members of the Church stating that they believed " the abuses denominated mesmerism and malpractice are carried on by some claiming to be metaphysicians ".

But anything Asa Eddy or the members of the Church might say about the mesmerists was as nothing compared with the vigour with which Mrs. Eddy expressed her views on this engrossing subject. The indictment of " the Nero of to-day and his abominable witchcraft " in the chapter on Demonology in that edition has a Hebraic grimness, reminiscent of some of the comminatory passages in the Old Testament. So subtle, indeed, had her sense become to its fell power that she could detect the differences between the mesmerism of Kennedy, Spofford and Arens. Sometimes unusual depression told her that all three were engaged upon their task at the same moment, and then the students to whom the task was given of " taking up " these currents had harder work than usual. Mesmerism not only affected her health, her literary style, her very punctuation ; it caused the pipes to freeze and her correspondence to go astray—half the letter boxes of Lynn were under the influence of malicious animal magnetism. During one of the influenza outbreaks of that time she is recorded one day to have remarked to her class : " I notice that a number of you are sneezing and coughing, and the cause is perfectly apparent to me. Kennedy and Spofford are treating you for hashish. Just treat yourselves against hashish and this will pass."

Mrs. Eddy could exercise extraordinary influence over those who came into contact with her. She could " transform the world " for her followers who kept unquestioned faith in the tenets of Christian Science and its central dogma that Spirit is Truth and matter is mortal error. It presented them with an interpretation of the Bible which made everything plain ; it taught them that progress was part of God's law and that, despite all appearances to the contrary, He was infinitely good. Their only difficulty was to

reconcile this with the doctrine of malicious animal magnetism, of that M.A.M., which seemed to hold them in bondage and envelop them in fear. Why should Mrs. Eddy use such vituperative language against persons like Kennedy and Spofford who were apparently harmless individuals, enjoying the respect of their friends and neighbours,—unless she was prompted by private pique? So in the end Mrs. Eddy's persecution mania, first implanted in her during early childhood by her strong-willed father and strengthened by her disastrous history as wife and mother, grew tiresome to those around her. Though she did not suspect it, conditions were ripe for a revolt, a revolt which began almost accidentally.

A young Bostonian called Howard, who had been living with Mr. and Mrs. Eddy and had succeeded to the position of factotum previously held by Arens, decided at length that he could no longer stand the atmosphere of fear and suspicion which Mrs. Eddy's belief in mesmerism produced. He spoke of it to Mrs. Rice, who with her sister Miss Dorcas Rawson had been amongst Mrs. Eddy's first followers, and to his astonishment found that they were of the same mind as himself. They approached others, including Margaret Dunshee, Treasurer of the Church and the most important officer in it next to Mrs. Eddy, and soon they had drawn up a statement explaining that, whilst acknowledging "the understanding of Truth" imparted to them by their leader, Mrs. Mary B. G. Eddy, they could no longer submit to such leadership owing to her "frequent ebullitions of temper, love of money, and the appearance of hypocrisy", and in consequence they offered their resignation. This statement was read at a meeting of the Christian Science Association held on October 21, 1881, at the house of Mrs. F. A. Daman, and came as a complete surprise to Mrs. Eddy, who saw therein merely a confirmation of the power of M.A.M. to which these followers of hers were apparently blind.

Mrs. Eddy recognized the dangers of this secession.

Seeing that they would not listen to her appeal for unity, she called a meeting of the Church for the following week, and there boldly expelled the recalcitrant eight from the ranks of the Christian Science body. Meanwhile two others had joined the seceders, Mrs. Daman and Miss A. A. Draper, who in a joint letter said that they "could no longer entertain the subject of mesmerism which had lately been made uppermost in the meetings and in Mrs. Eddy's talks". The loss of all these adherents was a severe blow to Mrs. Eddy, depriving her, as it did, of those upon whom she had most closely relied. Almost all her Lynn associates had now dropped away from her. No longer in the middle of the night could she send round to Mrs. Rice, whose own robust health attained an Erewhonian standard of morality, to come and treat her when she was suddenly mastered by some "belief". No longer could she rely upon Mr. Rice's purse as she had done when Mr. Eddy had been arrested and substantial bail was required. Gone was Miss Dorcas Rawson, an original Director of the Church, who for eleven years had been the most loyal of followers. The Treasurer, the Secretary, Mrs. Daman, whose house had been so useful for their meetings, the young man Howard, who had lived under her roof and even done her shopping—no light task, for Mrs. Eddy was exacting in the *minutiæ* of daily life and he soon found that a written list of commissions was the only way of avoiding subsequent criticisms—all these had left her. Of the others, none in Lynn could equal them in weight or ability. Most of these were frightened at the schism which had occurred, not least Asa Eddy, and for the next few months the Church reeled under the blow it had received. But Mrs. Eddy, her courage always rising highest in a crisis, worked hard to restore her prestige, and in the following February the members of the Church who had remained loyal published a manifesto in the Lynn *Union* in which they deplored the wickedness of the seceders and looked "with admiration and reverence upon Mrs. Eddy's Christ-

like example of meekness and charity", promising in future that they would "more faithfully follow and obey her divine instructions as the chosen messenger of God to bear His truth to the nations."

This affirmation of loyalty and obedience marked, however, the end of the Lynn period of Mrs. Eddy's life. She had already been cultivating the more fertile field which Boston offered for the sowing of the seed, and the year before had inaugurated in that city a school of Christian Science. This, incorporated under a State charter by the name of the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, was destined to play a considerable part in the growth of the next few years, some four thousand students passing through it during its brief existence of less than a decade. If its title seemed non-committal, and if the curriculum professed to include pathology, ontology, therapeutics and metaphysics, these branches of the natural and moral sciences were viewed through the lenses of Christian Science, and the only vital part of the students' course was the course of lectures given by the President, Mrs. Eddy, at first ten in number, but later reduced to seven, whilst the only book, besides the Bible, to be studied seriously was "Science and Health". What need could there be of others when Mrs. Eddy had said that "human systems of philosophy and religion" were departures from Christian Science and as such unworthy of attention? That there should be no mistake about her views, and that curious students should feel no desire to flounder in the morasses of error, she recommended them "not to read so-called scientific works, antagonistic to Christian Science, which advocate materialistic systems, because such works and words becloud the right sense of Christian Science". The "hopeless originality" of Christian Science precluded the possibility of finding it adumbrated in other systems. Happily "Science and Health" put it within their power to apprehend eternal standards of Truth never before appreciated, so that the fact of the students being confined to this and the

Bible did not adversely affect their training. Indeed, as her experience ripened it grew plain to her, so perfectly did her own book embody the pure evangelic truth, that even Bible study might be redundant. Thus she wrote that a student who said to a scientist, "I take so much comfort in reading my Bible", if wisely guided would be answered: "Let your Bible alone for three months or more. Don't open it, or think of it, but dig night and day at 'Science and Health'."

The shifting of her centre of work from Lynn to Boston was thus a gradual process, extending over three or four years and hastened at the end by the revolt of the Lynn students. Within a few months of that outburst of malicious animal magnetism Mrs. Choate led the hejira from the ungrateful Lynn to Boston, fated to be both the Medina and the Rome of the young faith. There she took for her leader a commodious house in Columbus Avenue, one of the elegant residential streets of the city, and thither Mrs. Eddy prepared to move. The Christian Science Home in Broad Street, Lynn, was fated to shelter no more the harassed lady who had once looked upon it as a haven of quiet after the boarding-houses in which she had been forced to live. Yet the last meeting of the Church, held amidst packing-cases in the already dismantled house, is notable in Christian Science annals for being that at which Julia Bartlett, the Abdiel of the cause, was admitted. Of all those members of the early Church she alone remained faithful to Mrs. Eddy until the end. "Amongst the faithless, faithful only she," Miss Bartlett, for long one of her leader's spiritual bodyguard, proved a stalwart and deserves a niche in the Christian Science Pantheon.

Before settling in Boston, Mr. and Mrs. Eddy paid a visit to Washington where they investigated the question of copyright which had assumed importance after Arens's flagrant plagiarism. From the knowledge there gained, Mrs. Eddy was afterwards able success-

fully to sue her former disciple and to secure the infrangibility of her copyrights, which have since remained secure, though the lapse of time has now enabled schismatic Christian Scientists to issue a cheap reprint of the original edition of " Science and Health ". It was, however, Asa Eddy's last contribution to the cause. When they had installed themselves in Boston his health began palpably to fail. Now that he lived quite near Arens, whose practice flourished and whose version of " Science and Health " lay in the bookshops, Mr. Eddy felt more acutely than ever the suggestion of evil which surrounded him. He could neither eat nor sleep, and it grew evident that unless something were done he would die. This fall into " error " on the part of their leader's husband did not pass unnoticed by the students, some of whom openly declared that he had cancer of the stomach. Mrs. Eddy, stronger in faith, felt sure that his illness was due to mesmerism and pronounced it to be mental arsenical poisoning. So sure was she of the correctness of her diagnosis that she took a step which only true courage could have prompted—she called in a doctor. Dr. Noyes, whom Mrs. Eddy summoned, was a young local practitioner with a rising reputation. But in spite of his skill, he did not take Mrs. Eddy's view of the case and declared that the patient was suffering from heart disease, prescribing the usual drugs and treatment for such a case.

She was disappointed that this representative of medical science failed to bear out her diagnosis. Dr. Noyes had no idea of the truth, patent to every Christian Scientist, that the deadliest poison is a secretion engendered by the working of hatred, and she had misjudged the progress made by the faculty in the science of healing when she had hoped that a doctor would be able to follow the intuition which revelation had accorded her. Asa Eddy, in any case, did not rely upon the digitalis, strychnine and other materia medica of the physician's prescription. He declared himself perfectly capable of " handling his belief ",

and Mrs. Eddy, absorbed in her affairs, did not take up the case, though she knew that she could treat him successfully if she tried. When she realized the danger it was too late ; the mesmerical arsenic had then permeated the system and made his cure hopeless. So she declared afterwards. In any case Asa Eddy struggled alone and in vain with his dread disease. " Only rid me of this suggestion of poison," he is said to have cried shortly before his death, " and I will recover." Thus he sank, as he thought, under the attacks of that malicious animal magnetism which had made his life miserable ever since he became the spouse of Mary Baker Glover, and in the early hours of a June morning, in 1882, he died.

Mrs. Eddy was not with him at the end. But when she had been called and told the news she was temporarily unnerved by this latest proof of the fell powers of mesmerism. The seceding students had murdered him by their necromantic spells—of that she remained convinced in spite of an autopsy which showed valvular disease of the heart, Dr. Noyes even pointing out to her the traces of it in the actual organ. She held to her opinion that her husband had been poisoned. " Not material poison, but mesmeric poison "—that, in her view, had caused his death, though Dr. Noyes could find no trace of arsenic in Asa Eddy's body, and in that opinion Christian Scientists still believe her to have been " scientifically " exact.

Two days later she gave an interview to the Boston *Post,* in which she explained the apparent failure of her system and accounted for the impertinent intrusion of death by throwing the blame on the mesmerists. " Oh, isn't it terrible that this fiend of malpractice is in the land ! " she exclaimed to her interviewer. She went on to say how she had sent for an ex-student, meaning though not naming Arens, to prove to him by metaphysics the cause of Mr. Eddy's death. " He was as pale as a ghost ", she said, " when he came to the door and refused to enter, or to believe that I knew what caused his death. Within half an hour after he

left I felt the same attack that my husband felt—the same that caused his death. I instantly gave myself the same treatment that I would in the case of arsenical poisoning and so I recovered, just the same as I should have caused my husband to recover had I taken the case in time." Yet if, for the moment, Mrs. Eddy quailed under this grand assault of the mesmerists, she soon recovered and the plans which she proceeded to lay, whilst passing the summer in the retirement of a Vermont farm, were destined to spread Christian Science over the length and breadth of the United States.

Destiny had so decreed, but only she knew it, as with unshaken determination this frail woman of sixty-two to whose bodily ills had now been added a palsy, prepared the next phase of her missionary career. The springs of that courage her latter-day followers have traced to love. In the heat of the battle weaker vessels might have allowed themselves to be misled into seeing only her " ebullitions of temper " and other failings. She herself, whatever her views on mesmerism as exemplified in certain mesmerists, had no doubt of the supreme virtue of Christian charity, as she prepared to organize her existence as one of unending service to Christian Science. Hitherto she had not found the fulfilling of her own individuality incompatible with her career, as her marriage with Asa Eddy had shown. Now her life grew to be inseparable from her work, and for the future she would fulfil her love by renouncing every personal wish and living entirely for Science. Following the example of the Gentile Apostle she was inspired to proclaim its beauty to the world. " What a word. I am in awe before it. Over what worlds and worlds it hath range and is sovereign ! the underived, the incomparable, the infinite All of Good, the *alone* God, is Love."

This quotation is from an article in *The Christian Science Journal* which she started in the spring following her return to Boston as a widow. Its first associate editor was Arthur T. Buswell, an early Boston convert

and one of the specially chosen bodyguard of spiritual children who resided with her in the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, now transferred to the house next door to that in which Mr. Eddy had died. From the start Mrs. Eddy took the greatest interest in its progress, and her own contributions to its pages, thrown off at a moment's notice, are of infinite value to the biographer. She reveals herself in many moods —grave, solemn, reproving, poetic, joyous, even jocose, as when she thanks students who have presented her with a watch for their "timely" gift, or when the presentation of a fish-pond in her garden makes her "ponder". She touches on all phases of life. Is marriage nearer right than celibacy, she asks, and replies that human knowledge inculcates that it is, while Science indicates that it *is not*. On this all-important question of social ethics she is inclined to agree with the early Christians, who would, however, have been unable to follow her in her advocacy of temperance, which went so far as to assert that strong drink was unquestionably an evil and that its slightest use was abuse. Yet Mrs. Eddy knew what it was to enjoy convivial delights and she has left us one pen picture of a Thanksgiving dinner where "the rich viands made busy many appetites". A picture of good cheer and bygone profuseness, in which "under the skilful carving of the generous host, the mammoth turkey grew beautifully less. His was the glory to vie with guests in the dexterous use of knife and fork, until delicious pie, pudding, and fruit caused unconditional surrender." One quotes the sentence with the more pleasure for its aroma of style, which grows stronger as the writer leads the paragraph round to the one all-important question. "Now! baby has tumbled soft as thistledown on the floor; and instead of a real set-to at crying, a look of cheer and a toy from mamma bring the soft little palms patting together and pucker the rosebud mouth into saying, 'Oh pretty.' That was a scientific baby." So they feasted and made cheer, though as she thought of

desolate homes where tables were bare she inwardly prayed. And at the end she drank to Peace and Plenty and Happy Households—but "in a bumper of pudding sauce".

Sometimes Mrs. Eddy gave her poetic faculty the reins, impelled thereto by some aspect of Nature for whom she confessed "an obstinate penchant in all her moods and forms". The result might be some simple sentence such as "spring is my sweetheart, whose voices are sad or glad, even as the heart may be; restoring in memory the sweet rhythm of unforgotten harmonies, or touching tenderly its tearful tones". Or the impulse might be so strong as to lead her to a more elaborate piece of word painting. This is how a sunrise appeared to her: "Who shall describe the brave splendour of a November sky, that this morning burst through the attic for me, on my bed? According to terrestrial calculations, above the horizon, in the east, there rose one rod of rainbow hues, crowned with an acre of Eldritch ebony. Little by little this topmost pall, drooping on a deeply dazzling sunlight, softened, grew grey, then gay, and glided into a glory of mottled marvels. Fleecy, faint, fairy blue and golden flecks came out on a background of cerulean hue; while the lower lines of light kindled into gold, orange, pink, crimson, violet; and diamond, topaz, opal, garnet, turquoise, and sapphire spangled the gloom in celestial space as with the brightness of his glory. Then thought I, What are we, that He who fashions forever such forms and hues of Heaven, should move our brush or pen, to paint frail fairness, or to weave a web of words that glow with gladdening gleams of God. . . ."

This sublime strain was varied by many others. Sometimes she turned to castigate Kennedy, Spofford and Arens, warning Scientists against malpractitioners. "Take heed," she writes, "some of the mere puppets of the hour are playing only for money, and at a fearful stake. Others, from malice and envy, are working out the destinies of the damned." Another

outburst, too hurried for the niceties of punctuation and spelling, runs : " The basis of mesmerism is Thou shalt steal, thou shalt kill, thou shalt commit adultery, because thou canst, and the law of God has not ruled out the temptation to do this." And when Phineas Quimby is mentioned he has shrunk to a " magnetic practitioner ", that Quimby whose demise had seemed to her at the time an almost irremediable disaster—so changed had her previous values become under the growing light of Christian Science. Natural science, too, received less attention as time went on, though " the ego that passes from molecule and monkey up to man "—Mrs. Eddy never lost pleasure in rattling the novice's toy of alliteration—meets with occasional notice.

But the majority of her readers were not interested in the origin of species ; they were interested in their complaints, in Mrs. Eddy's explanation of the Bible, and above all in Mrs. Eddy, who took good care that their natural curiosity should be gratified, and kept herself well to the fore. Every year the list of the Christmas presents she received from students was printed in the *Journal*—a list that grows with the increase in the numbers of the faithful. Even the Correspondence column is redolent with the personality of Mrs. Eddy. " Has Mrs. Eddy lost her power to heal ? " asks one doubting Thomas, to receive the reply : " Has the sun forgotten to shine and the planets to revolve around it ? Who was it discovered, demonstrated, and teaches Christian Science ? " The leader was ready to give her views on all subjects—not least on that of the position of women. Her *Journal* was one of the earliest periodicals in America to demand enfranchisement for her sex, and her own feeling of sex superiority deeply coloured the later presentation of Christian Science. They even helped her to decide on the vexed question of the sex of angels. " Because my ideal of an angel ", she writes, " is a woman without *feathers* on her wings—is it less artistic, or less natural ? Pictures which present disordered phases

of natural conceptions and personality blind with animality, are not my concepts of angels. What is the natural ego, but the counterfeit of the spiritual ? " So in a few lines she resolved problems that have puzzled theologians and painters, helping also to lay the foundations of that predominance which women have won for themselves in American life. There was nothing, in effect, which Christian Science could not do. Its virtues extended over the whole domestic circle, including the live stock, and if a Christian Scientist's horse went blind he only had to " deny all error " for his beast, which then, realizing that sight was a spiritual thing and that it was God's horse, would be cured. Those who turn up the files of the *Christian Science Journal* may read for themselves many cures wrought after this fashion which do much to throw an amusing light on the simplicity of the pragmatical American religious temperament.

The *Journal* at first appeared every second month, later becoming a mensual publication. From the start it justified Mrs. Eddy's anticipations in spreading the faith in places where it could not otherwise have reached. Indeed the only trouble she had with it concerned its editors—always a difficult point for the newspaper proprietor. Mr. A. T. Buswell proved an excellent choice until he fell into heresies, heresies concerning hypnosis which thinly veiled the mesmeric influences directed against Science. He was accordingly expelled from the Christian Science Association. Mrs. Emma Hopkins, a favourite student, succeeded him. A lady of vivid enthusiasm, she professed unbounded loyalty for her leader. But she also fell away and with Mrs. Plunkett, another student who had superimposed upon orthodox Science the dangerous belief in marriage by the selection of soul affinity, left for the Middle West where they taught Christian Science, perverted again by the old enemy but in so subtle a form that only Mrs. Eddy's acute sense for the mesmerists could detect the M.A.M. in their doctrine. The error was graver in that they started

a rival periodical, *The International Magazine of Christian Science*, which directly threatened the *Christian Science Journal*.

After Mrs. Hopkins followed Mrs. Crosse. She remained as Mrs. Eddy's associate editor until 1888, when she had doubts of the efficacy of faith-healing and decided to study medicine. Her defection led to the appointment of the Rev. Frank Mason, who soon strayed from the fold and started a church of his own in Brooklyn. Thus did mesmerism concentrate its currents against this spear-head of Christian Science until Mrs. Eddy decided that the only safety lay in flight and ordered William G. Nixon, the publisher, to transfer the *Journal* to Philadelphia. This offered material difficulties greater than those created by malicious animal magnetism and the *Journal* remained in Boston. But Mr. Nixon, in his turn, fell a victim to apostasy, the occasion being doubts on the legal formalities by which the property of the Mother Church, then in process of erection, was being secured. With him, however, the powers of mesmerism over the personnel of this periodical seem to have exhausted themselves and there were no further disloyalties on the part of the staff. But by this time Mrs. Eddy had retired from active participation in its production.

14

DURING this decade of growth in the 'eighties Mrs. Eddy, now on the verge of old age, rose to the full height of her powers. She taught assiduously in the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, she lectured, she wrote, she even became a personality in the social world of Boston, being at home on Thursday evenings in her house in Columbus Avenue which she had now furnished more sumptuously in keeping with her enhanced prestige. Students flocked to her from all quarters, for the new revelation had now begun to spread westward and she had as many students as she cared to take. When she met anyone who struck

her as likely to be a useful recruit she used all her personal charm to draw that person into her orbit. Mrs. A. E. Stetson, destined to be for years her chief lieutenant and to found the Christian Science Church in New York, has related how she first happened to be present at a lecture given by Mrs. Eddy in a private house in Boston. During its course she lost all sense of grief and prostration which had come from a year's nursing of a sick husband; at its close Mrs. Stetson, under the mysterious power of Mrs. Eddy's personality, followed her across the hall as she withdrew. After Mrs. Eddy had mounted a few of the stairs, she turned round and looking down into her eyes with a searching, penetrating gaze, asked her to come and see her. When Mrs. Stetson gave a non-committal reply, Mrs. Eddy added: "I want you to come and see me. You are going to do a great work in Christian Science." Mrs. Stetson had been trained for the stage and platform and possessed literary and oratorical gifts which proved exceedingly useful to the cause. But the fate of the ablest of all Mrs. Eddy's students was to resemble that of so many others, though her expulsion led to the most serious of the many schisms in the history of the Church.

If some of the Bostonian intellectuals smiled at the new creed, one at least, Bronson Alcott, then a very old man, hailed her as bearing a revelation to an age "sunk in sensualism". This extraordinary product of the dilettante intellectual radicalism of Boston had sought earnestly for truth through a long life and had made many experiments towards developing the social consciousness of his fellows, one of them being a school in which an erring pupil's sense of shame was quickened by his having to chastise the teacher. Alcott's homage and the interest of others versed in letters was a new thing in Mrs. Eddy's experience. She realized that her own literary powers, which seemed transcendent to the uneducated, lacked the technique of the professional writer. With an acumen and absence of vanity, both highly creditable to an

authoress who after years of neglect had at last seen her book sell by the thousand, she decided to entrust her manuscript of the new edition to a literary adviser who should go over it line by line and make it conform to the conventional requirements of grammar and syntax. To that end she submitted her manuscript to the Rev. J. A. Wiggin, a retired Unitarian minister and the leading dramatic critic in Boston, who also at one time had been an editor of the University Press. Mr. Wiggin got on very well with Mrs. Eddy, who placed more confidence in him than in many professed Scientists. She liked his lively tongue, the robust health which emanated from his ample frame, his genial Bohemianism which made him feel at home everywhere, even in Mrs. Eddy's class that he attended for a course. And she respected his judgment. " Mr. Wiggin, you know, I sometimes believe God speaks to me through you," she once observed to him, with an irony worthy of St. Teresa.

On his side, Mr. Wiggin served Mrs. Eddy well. How great the transformation he wrought in " Science and Health " only those can realize who have compared the earlier editions with those that followed his revision. Macaulay's remark about Montgomery's readers, that they must take such grammar as they can get and be thankful, had hitherto applied to the students of " Science and Health ". Unattached and wrongly attached participles (beginning with the first word of the preface) had wandered over its pages ; strange words, unsystematic punctuation, involved sentences, all helped to hide Mrs. Eddy's meaning behind a clumsy, rhetorical style. Mr. Wiggin was not able to reconcile the Gnostic dualism which, in however crude a form, is the basis of Christian Science, neither could he explain the antinomies which had not failed to assert themselves in the new revelation. But he could give Mrs. Eddy's periods an ease and directness which with all her re-writing—and no author ever laboured harder at a book than did she with " Science and Health "—she had been unable to do. Mrs.

Eddy, for instance, had opened her chapter on marriage as follows: "When our great Teacher went to John to be baptized, not having reached his motives, the good patriarch was astounded, and reading his thoughts, Jesus prefaced his purpose, saying, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it become thus to fulfil all righteousness.'" Under Mr. Wiggin's pruning it came out thus: "When our great Teacher came to him for baptism, John was astounded. Reading his thoughts, Jesus added: 'Suffer' etc.," and in that form it has remained in every subsequent edition. This example could be paralleled on practically every page. Mr. Wiggin not only clarified Mrs. Eddy's involved periods. He prevailed on her to omit the famous chapter on Demonology on the ground that it was libellous. And when she hovered too near the ridiculous, he led her gently away. Mrs. Eddy, for instance, always having in mind the issue of Science *v.* the Bible, which of course her own book was to reconcile, had imagined woman as going forth to do battle, a feminine David against the male Goliath represented by Huxley, Tyndall and Agassiz. Mr. Wiggin, faithful to his trust, altered the passage to its present shape: "In this revolutionary period, like the shepherd boy with his sling, woman goes forth to battle with Goliath."

The peculiar kind of chivalry which has caused the male American not to undertake adventures himself, but to pay for those that his lady enjoys in far continents, runs strongly through Christian Science. The most splendid affirmation of the feminity of God is found in the chapter on the Apocalypse, which made its first appearance in this edition of "Science and Health", where it is identified with the "little book" which the angel held open. The whole of the twelfth chapter, Mrs. Eddy pointed out, had a special significance for the 19th century. "And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." The prophesy clearly applied to Divine Science, the immaculate idea which

was the true second coming, and Mary Baker Eddy, the vessel chosen for purveying this grace, assumed an exceptional position in the hierarchy of Heaven. "She existed from the beginning before all ages . . . it is she who shall create in Heaven a light which shall never be extinguished . . . and the Desired of the Nations shall appear." So wrote one contributor to the *Journal*. The Rev. George B. Day, Pastor of the First Church of Christ Scientist in Chicago, observed that Christian Science denoted the transfer of the gospel from male to female trust. "Eighteen hundred years ago Paul declared that man was the head of the woman; but now in 'Science and Health' it is asserted that woman is the highest form of man." Another contributor to the *Journal* compared the work of Mrs. Eddy with that of Christ, pointing out that the latter "demonstrated" over death and disease, but that Mrs. Eddy, in her book, had explained exactly how it was done, which the previous Messiah had failed to do. "To-day Truth has come through the person of a New England girl. . . . From the cradle she gave indications of a divine mission which caused *her* mother to ponder them in her heart." So her followers exalted Mrs. Eddy, whilst Mrs. Eddy exalted woman who, she said, was more spiritual than man, for Eve had more conscience than Adam since she had been the first to admit her fault in the incident of the Tree. As a reward a woman had been permitted to give birth to Jesus Christ, and to another it had been vouchsafed to write "Science and Health". "There is one Moses, one Jesus, one Mary," declared the President of the Christian Science Congress in 1890, echoing these strains of triumphant feminism which are the one characteristic quality of Christian Science. As zealous Scientists, influenced by that exuberance of religious emotion which is peculiar to the Jewish and English stocks, basked in the radiance of their faith, they put no limit to their claims for their founder. It was pointed out in the *Journal* that "Science and Health" "could not be said to be

based upon any edition of the Bible. The Chosen One, always with God in the Mount, speaks face to face. In other words, 'Science and Health' is a first-hand revelation."

Mr. Wiggin, who ascribed Mrs. Eddy's theories to P. P. Quimby, ran no danger of falling a victim to such zeal. Far from being zealous, indeed, he became, in Mrs. Eddy's eyes, slothful and irreverent. She accused him—in a letter to another—of dilatoriness and of showing "a most shocking flippancy" in his proof corrections. "This is M.A.M.," she wrote, "and it governs Wiggin as it has done once before to prevent the publishing of my work." So came to an end a collaboration about which controversy has lifted an angry head, though it seems creditable to both parties, and Mrs. Eddy, in her own words, held him in loving and grateful memory.

15

THROUGHOUT the seventh decade of her life Mrs. Eddy saw her cause going from strength to strength. Christian Science was thoroughly congenial to the American temperament in making no pretence of extolling poverty. If a healer did not prosper, she —for most of them were women—could not have been advanced in Science. So as they spread over the Middle and Far West from the thirty academies that were already in existence towards the end of the 'eighties, they found an alimentation to their religious zeal in their professional desire to obtain patients. Their leader gave them clearest proof that advancement in Science was synonymous with advancement in wealth. So greatly had her income increased that in 1887 she decided on "a material change of base", in other words she moved into a more exclusive neighbourhood. Readers of the *Journal* were duly informed of Mrs. Eddy's change of domicile. "The price is recorded in real estate transactions as $40,000. . . . The spot is very beautiful and the house has

been finished and furnished under the advice of a professional decorator. The locality is excellent. For the information of friends not acquainted with Boston it may be stated that Commonwealth Avenue is the most fashionable in the City. . . . Within a few yards of Mrs. Eddy's mansion is the massive residence of His Excellency Oliver Ames, the present Governor of Massachusetts."

But if Mrs. Eddy, by thus removing from the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, took the first step towards that policy of Vatican-like seclusion, which served her so well for the last twenty years of her life, she did not mean thereby to renounce in the slightest degree her control of the movement, a control that was ever being challenged. The attacks made upon her by other faith-healers, like Julius Dresser, himself once one of Quimby's patients, or by orthodox divines, did her more good than harm. Mr. Dresser reprinted her own articles on Quimby; she replied that when she wrote them she was the victim of M.A.M.—and her followers were satisfied. "Persecution" from the Churches she regarded as a compliment. The case was different when students of Christian Science, impelled by intellectual curiosity, began to discuss the foundations of the faith. Mrs. Eddy, prompted by the masterful spirit of the Bakers, determined that her religion should be unique in having no apologetic literature except her own writings. For infringing this unformulated rule, Ursula Gestefeld, one of the Chicago leaders, was the first of the faithful to be put on the index. Mrs. Gestefeld had written a little exposition of "Science and Health" entitled "A Statement of Christian Science" which did no more than profess to explain "Science and Health" in simple language; but it was enough for her to be branded as a mesmerist and expelled the Church. To suppress any further attempts to comment on, or discuss, the revelation that belonged to her alone, Mrs. Eddy laid down the rule that teachers of Christian Science should read no literature upon the

subject of mind-cure except her own, and to prevent any "conspiracy" arising from those who favoured liberal thought she introduced a by-law that no two members of the Christian Science Association should meet to discuss mental healing without all the other members of the Association being present.

Mrs. Eddy ruled and was obeyed. Yet the opposition which had always seemed to spring from those closest to her still made itself felt, and disloyalty entered the ranks of the Boston students. These were critical of her love of elegant living, of her arbitrariness and not least, for there is nothing so dull as the hates of others, of her obsession with malicious animal magnetism. In Mrs. Eddy's phrase they tried with one breath to credit the message and to discredit the messenger. They were finally driven to mutiny by Mrs. Eddy's action in what is known as the Corner Case. Mrs. Corner, a student and healer who had duly been through the obstetric class, attended her daughter in childbirth with fatal results to mother and infant. For this she was prosecuted in the State courts. Mrs. Corner's action, though perfectly justifiable by the canons of Christian Science, did not commend itself to Mrs. Eddy who naturally wished her followers to avoid infringing the laws. Mr. Wiggin has related an anecdote bearing upon this question. He writes:

> As in her book, so in her class (which I went through) she says: "Call a surgeon in surgical cases." "What if I find a breech presentation in childbirth?" asked a pupil. "You will not if you are in Christian Science," replied Mrs. Eddy. "But if I do?" "Then send for the nearest medical practitioner." You see Mrs. Eddy is nobody's fool.

The foolish Mrs. Corner had not sent for a doctor and Mrs. Eddy had no intention of being her fool. But the zealous scientists of Boston and Mrs. Corner's

friends considered this to be desertion of one who had only been acting in accordance with Truth.

With her usual foresight Mrs. Eddy met this threatening schism by going to the National Christian Science Association meeting in Chicago and by calling on all her followers to do likewise. The result was a triumph. Four thousand people attended the opening meeting, which had been well advertised by the papers and when the "Boston Prophetess", as the Chicago journalists called her, appeared in the hall the whole audience rose to its feet and greeted her with wild enthusiasm. She walked to the centre of the platform and after she had been introduced by that Rev. George Day, whose tribute to her embodiment of the feminine conception of deity has already been quoted, she prefaced her address by repeating the first verse of the 91st Psalm: "He that dwelleth in the secret places of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." This discourse the faithful regard as the finest effort of her life. Read in cold print, divorced from that ringing voice and that intense gaze, it hardly bears out such a valuation. It is said to have been inadequately transcribed as the shorthand writers were so affected that they forgot their job. Certain it is (or as certain as reports can make it) that when she had finished her peroration—

> Traitors to right of them,
> M.D.'s to left of them,
> Priestcraft in front of them,
> Volleyed and thundered;
> Into the jaws of death,
> Out through the door of love,
> On—to the blest above
> Marched the one hundred.

—"a great wave of health flooded the hall". Old men and old women tried to totter to the rostrum; mothers held up their babies to be cured; men leapt upon the platform and helped women to follow them; everyone wept. Such scenes had never occurred before in the history of Christian Science. They were

repeated when Mrs. Eddy appeared at a reception in her hotel. The crowds were so great that the fashionable beauties of Chicago had their clothes torn off their backs and lost their jewels in the frantic rush to see and hear and, if possible, shake hands with the elderly lady from intellectual Boston who had found a new interpretation of the Bible.

With Chicago's example before her of the strength of the cause, Mrs. Eddy could hardly have felt disposed to humour the dissentient members of the Boston Church. They, too, were equally well aware of the fate they would suffer, and so in order to prevent their expulsion for "immorality" with its sting of ignominy, they possessed themselves of the Association's books and told Mrs. Eddy, on her return, that they would not give them back until they had been allowed to resign their membership. To this she had to consent, and thirty-six members of the Boston Church marched out in this way with their colours flying and the honours of war. Their loss to Christian Science was negligible, but it helped to bring to an end the Boston period in Mrs. Eddy's life. She now felt restless and unhappy in the city where she had found a refuge from Lynn six years before. Boston was riddled with mesmerism. It showed itself everywhere, in the disloyalties of some, in the loyalties of others who could not be content to go through the course at the Massachusetts Metaphysical College under any lecturer but herself. It even affected her immediate entourage. "You are so full of mesmerism that your eyes stick out like a boiled codfish," she remarked once to one of them. She felt she must escape. The question was how and where. As the most austere of the Cæsars had been disgusted with Rome and had withdrawn to rule the world from the retirement of Capri, so Mrs. Eddy made up her mind to quit Boston and exercise her nation-wide authority from some less dangerous place. This might prove difficult to find. Anyhow retire she must, as she made it clear in this announcement: "Imperative,

accumulative, sweet demands rest on my retirement from life's bustle. What, then, of continual recapitulation of tired aphorisms, and disappointed ethics; of patching breaches widened the next hour; of pounding wisdom and love into sounding brass; of warming marble and quenching volcanoes!"

16

THERE could be no doubt of the dangers in Boston. Only the year before her son George had written to say that he was coming with his family to pay her a visit and she had done her best to put him off, telling him how she was at war with the world, the flesh and evil ("The Choates are doing all they can by falsehood and public shames such as advertising a college of her own within a few doors of mine when she is a disgraceful woman"), and that Boston was the last place for him and his family. "When I retire into private life," she said, "then I can receive you, if you are reformed, but not otherwise. I say this to you, not to anyone else. I would not injure you any more than myself." But George had a Baker for his mother and to Boston he went with his family. Mrs. Eddy received them kindly, took a house for them and at a Christian Science Fair introduced them to her followers, she herself entering after the company were assembled to the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March, symbolical of her indissoluble union with Truth. This concession on her part to maternal pride was, however, only momentary. The unreformed George, who smoked and drank strong waters and failed to understand the first principles of his mother's revelation, could take no place in her life. So ignorant was he of Christian Science that when a neighbour had asked him why he had not called the Christian Science leader to treat the fatal illness of one of his children, he had replied: "Why, do you know, I never thought of mother."

Yet Mrs. Eddy badly wanted someone who would

stand to her in filial relationship, someone obedient —and a Scientist. George, who thought that mesmerism could be met by a six-shooter, was no spiritual son of hers, and when he returned West she never saw him, or his family, again. This last disappointment in her own flesh and blood led to her decision to acquire a son by adoption. A certain Ebenezer J. Foster, a qualified medical practitioner, had joined her class where, thanks to his credentials—for the Massachusetts Metaphysical College did not get M.D.'s every day—and also to his quiet, yielding ways, he had been invited to reside with her in Commonwealth Avenue, an honour reserved only for the most favoured students. When she informed him that she meant to strengthen the ties between them, he is said to have felt some uneasiness until he learnt that she intended to adopt him. This was legally done in the autumn of 1888, and Dr. E. J. Foster-Eddy played a minor part in the life of his mother by adoption during the next few years.

She hoped to rely upon Bennie, as she called her new son, to take some of the load off her own shoulders. He would come between her and the world, whilst his doctor's degree would help him to counteract the beliefs which the mesmerists continually inflicted upon her. The nervous strain of her work had, in fact, become too great to be borne. Her time was taken up with the thousand and one things that beset the leader of a cause, by the thousand and one people who wished to see her. She taught at the College; she edited the *Journal*; she ruled the Church. It was too much for a woman of nearly seventy, who enjoyed indifferent health, and the desire to escape grew overwhelming. Other motives, too, weighed with her. The mutiny in Boston had shown her the dangers of schism in the very bosom of her Church, dangers against which for the future she meant to provide. And there was also need for her to prepare for the final victory. Old age had come upon her, and though Death was an illusion, it was nevertheless

an illusion so deeply ingrained in the human mind that unless she grappled with it now she might succumb to it herself. To make the supreme demonstration over the last enemy was a task only to be undertaken in the seclusion for which she longed.

So, day by day Boston grew more distasteful, until she declared she would stay in it no longer. A hurried retreat to Barre in Vermont proved unsuccessful, for whilst she thus avoided the mesmeric currents of Boston she found the efforts of the local band of Barre even more distressing and returned to Boston. A second flitting led her to Concord, the capital of her home state of New Hampshire, in the vicinity of which she had spent her earliest years. But the furnished house she took there proved unsuitable, and her son Bennie rushed back to Boston, and in the suburb of Roslindale discovered a villa which she decided would suit her. The fact that the owner demanded a higher price than its market value made it clear that M.A.M. was trying to prevent her from taking it and she therefore paid the money, only to discover as soon as she had entered it that the neighbours were indeed mesmerized. Back to Concord she went and there she remained, first in the same furnished house, moving in 1892 to a pleasant property on the outskirts of the town where she built herself a commodious villa from the windows of which she could see the hills of her childhood. " Pleasant View " remained her home till three years before she died, when she returned once again to the outskirts of Boston.

She was now free to lay down the policy under which Christian Science could undertake its national and world mission. One by one she had divested herself of the functions she had hitherto performed. When she retired from the editorship of the *Journal* she inserted a disclaimer in its pages, the seven points of which are held by her followers as proving Mrs. Eddy's intention to withdraw from active leadership of the Cause. Those seven points included such topics as the matter that should be printed in the

Journal, the choice of pastors for Churches, marriage, divorce and the family affairs of Scientists, disease and the treatment of the sick; with these things she refused to be concerned any more, though she added that she would "love all mankind and work for their welfare". "As our dear mother in God", said the *Journal,* commenting on this decision, "withdraws herself from our midst and goes up into the Mount for higher communings to show us and the generations to come the way to our true consciousness of God, let us honour Him and keep silence. . . ." In this way she took the first step towards the goal she saw ahead.

The next concerned the Massachusetts Metaphysical College. This institution had been brilliantly successful. Students flocked to it, and there was a waiting list of several hundreds. At first Mrs. Eddy had thought it might be possible to entrust its direction to other hands than her own, and with that idea had brought General Erastus N. Bates, pastor of the Cincinnati Church, to Boston. But he had hardly begun to lecture when Mrs. Eddy changed her mind and decided to close the institution altogether, much to the chagrin of the General who had resigned his work in Cincinnati. She changed her mind on this point, though she saw clearly enough the end she wished to attain, which was to rule through an organization in Boston that should be the Mother Church for the whole movement. With this in view she requested the National Christian Science Association, when it met in New York in 1890, to dissolve its organization, and early in the same year she made the same demand of the Boston Church, and thus the Church of Christ (Scientist) which had been incorporated under a state charter eleven years before, though not legally dissolved, came in effect to an end. "The dissolution of the visible organization of the Church", she stated in the *Journal,* "is the sequence and complement of that of the college corporation and association. The college disappeared that the spirit of Christ might

have freer intercourse amongst its students and all who come into the understanding of Divine Science. The bonds of the church were thrown away so that its members might assemble themselves together to 'provoke one another to good works' in the bond only of love."

Meanwhile she had been preparing the way for the reorganization of the Boston Church which the mutiny had shown to be undependable. Never again should the disobedience so flagrantly shown be allowed to raise its head. "Experience, and above all obedience," she wrote in "Science and Health", "are the tests of growth and understanding in Science" and on that quality which religious leaders of all ages have lauded she, too, meant to build her Church. To build it both in spirit and in stone. Hitherto the Christian Scientists of Boston had never had an edifice of their own, though in 1886 they had purchased the plot of land in Falmouth Street where the Mother Church now stands. The value of this was ten thousand dollars, of which they had paid two thousand and mortgaged the rest. By the end of 1888 they had reduced the mortgage to just under five thousand dollars when Mrs. Eddy arranged to have it assigned to her. A few months later her lawyer foreclosed and her lawyer's brother bought in the property. By these astute legal formalities Mrs. Eddy found herself in possession of the land upon which the Boston Church was to have been built at what had been half its market value some years before. But if the members of the Church of Christ (Scientist) as incorporated in Boston had seen the money which they had subscribed pass out of their hands there was no thought of personal profit in their leader's action. Her only desire was to secure personal ownership of the site in order thereby to obtain control of the Mother Church which she now meant to organize.

Difficulties of many kinds arose, however, when she began to refashion the organization of the Boston Church and to turn it into the Mother Church, which

should rule the movement *urbi et orbi*. She appointed three trustees, to whom she made over the site and who were empowered to collect subscriptions for the erection of a Church building upon it. But because the State Commissioner of Corporations refused to grant a new charter on the ground that the old had never been annulled, William Nixon and his fellow trustees resigned and handed back their trust into Mrs. Eddy's keeping. She knew the ways of mesmerism too intimately to be put off by such a manifestation of its powers, and bade her lawyers find some way out of the impasse. This they did by searching the statute books and discovering an old and forgotten enactment by which trustees might be deemed a body corporate for the purpose of holding grants and donations without the formal organization of a Church. Again therefore she conveyed this much deeded site, now worth twenty thousand dollars, to four trustees, who pledged themselves to build a Church edifice thereon, and became the original members of the Board of Directors. Mrs. Eddy, commenting on the way this transaction had been carried out, said: "I had this desirable site transferred in a circuitous, novel way. . . . I knew that to God's gift, foundation and superstructure no one could hold a wholly material title. The land and the church standing on it must be conveyed through a type representing the true nature of a gift; a type morally and spiritually inalienable but materially questionable. . . ."

Having settled this matter, Mrs. Eddy went on to fashion the statutes of the Mother Church, binding the directors to carry on the services only in strict harmony with the doctrines and practice of Christian Science, as taught and explained by her in the seventy-first, or in any subsequent edition of "Science and Health"—a very important qualification. The omission, or neglect on their part to comply with any of the conditions of the trust constituted a breach of its conditions and caused the title to revert to Mrs. Eddy, or her heirs. The Church was reorganized in

September, 1892, and the choice of officers made privately. Admission to membership could only be secured by the ballot of twelve charter members who scrutinized the claims of every candidate, including of course previous members of the Boston Church, so that when the first annual meeting was held in the following year Mrs. Eddy, elected Pastor Emeritus, had forged an instrument through which she could guide the destinies of the faith as her wisdom dictated. So ably had she done her work that until her demise it proved the efficient instrument of her will. "Brethren," wrote Dr. Foster-Eddy in the *Journal*, "this is an epoch in the history of Christian Science. The year has been a marked one to us. The chaff has been separated from the wheat in a most marvellous manner." The fact that "membership of the Mother Church signified obedience" in no way deterred candidates for membership, who were taken from the local Churches throughout what was now known as the "field", and every year Mrs. Eddy found a larger and stronger body of followers ready to obey her slightest word.

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SECURE at length in her control of the movement which had so often nearly wriggled out of her grasp, she ruled. She ruled from Concord and controlled every lever of the rapidly growing organization, though as time passed she found it necessary to tighten a nut here, to adjust a bolt there. Characteristically she made the first use of her new-found seclusion in returning once again to the book over which she had laboured ever since she first had known Phineas Quimby in Portland, Maine, nearly thirty years before. And characteristically, also, she found her efforts thwarted by M.A.M. Her son and the workers whose business it was to act as her spiritual bodyguard were ordered to treat the printers and staff of the University Press for the ubiquitous enemy. When the 1891 edition

was in the printers' hands a note beginning "My dearest One," tells Dr. Foster-Eddy to keep Mr. Wilson, "who manages the bindery", under his care alone. Other workers are to treat the printers. She encloses an "argument" to instruct the workers in the line they are to follow: "Nothing can hinder the book, 'Science and Health', from being published immediately. The press and machinery that publish this book and all who work on it in the press and bindery are safe in God's hands, they cannot be and are not governed by hatred. They are governed, upheld, and prospered by Love and the book is coming out rapidly. When the book goes to the bindery then stop the press aid and turn all their force there." Workers might be slack and lazy, indeed she often found fault with them for being so. On the other hand, Dr. Foster-Eddy's filial zeal appears in this case to have been excessive, for another note runs: "I have just found out what did (but did not) produce a temporary tempest here. It was the help you procured on the Press! Never put 'new wine into old bottles'. Those persons named are utterly incapable of handling the Red Dragon. They can command serpents but not the last species." In Mrs. Eddy's own phraseology those about her must have thought she was (but was not) an easy leader to serve.

A special subject for her care during the first years of her withdrawal was the edifice of the Mother Church. Fifty thousand dollars were wanted to build this memorial, "for her through whom was revealed to you God's all-power, all-presence and all-science"—the words are Mrs. Eddy's. The severe financial crisis of 1894 affected the pockets of Scientists equally with those of other folk and subscriptions hung fire. But when Mrs. Eddy issued a personal appeal to forty prominent followers, each subscribed a thousand dollars and the grey granite Gothic building then rose rapidly. It was dedicated in January, 1895, as the Mother Church, which it still remains, though it has since been dwarfed by the great renaissance Temple adjoining

—the excelsior extension as Mrs. Eddy described it. Following her policy of withdrawal, she did not appear at the initial function in the Church that had been built in her honour, which the inscription across its front put on record. Subsequently she preached, however, twice in its pulpit, and on one occasion spent the night in the special apartments built for her in the Tower of the Church. The "Mother Room" had been fitted up in the most lavish and exquisite manner. Marble and onyx gleamed from the walls, the furniture shone in white and gold, even the plumbing was gold-plated. And in a stained-glass window, to which she had herself generously subscribed, was shown the little garret room of the house in Broad Street, Lynn, with Mrs. Eddy seated at a table writing "Science and Health" whilst through the open skylight the star of Bethlehem shed its radiance upon her.

It was all the more beautiful since the furniture and fittings had been provided by the Busy Bees, a society of scientific children. In gratitude Mrs. Eddy dedicated to them her next book of reprints, "Pulpit and Press", and allowed them the privilege of buying it at half price. It was, the dedication said, a "unique book", which in any other author would suggest vanity. But Mrs. Eddy, like a famous character in fiction, used words in meanings of her own, as when she once called a most staid member of the Boston Church an adulteress, upholding the justice of the epithet because the lady in question had adulterated truth. It is difficult, however, to say exactly what meaning she attached to "unique", except possibly that she felt at the moment the overpowering love of an author for the latest child of his pen. In her youth Mary Baker had first felt that lust for writing which is perhaps the most dangerous form of self-indulgence possible to mankind. Now, in the comparative quiet of Concord, she was able "to take the numerous gems she had found in the deep mines of truth and polish them on Heaven's

emery stone ", as her adopted son wrote, in introducing the first of the three editions of " Science and Health " which appeared in the 'nineties. Since each new edition made obsolete those that had preceded it, and since every Christian Scientist was expected to read Truth in its latest manifestation, it is not to be wondered at that Mrs. Eddy made a fortune from her pen unequalled in the annals of literature.

" Science and Health ", of course, was an inspired book and sold itself. The sales of her others required more attention and we find this woman of well over seventy showing the writer's true zeal in pushing her work. When she brought out her " Miscellaneous Writings ", being reprints of her articles to the *Christian Science Journal* over the period 1883–96, she emphasized in the dedication to " Loyal Christian Scientists " that the book was indispensable to the culture and achievement which constitute the success of a student. But, if it solaced her to think that the " comfortable fortunes of Scientists were acquired by healing mankind morally, physically and spiritually " and that they were, by implication, well able to afford this volume, she had to admit that it was still in advance of its time. In order, therefore, to secure its proper study she ordered that all Teachers, and all Christian Science Academies, of which there were then some fifty in existence, should suspend their didactic functions for the year 1897, since " Miscellaneous Writings " was calculated " to prepare the minds of all true thinkers to understand the Christian Science Text-Book more correctly than a student could ". The obedience which had now come to be the cardinal virtue in Science enabled Mrs. Eddy to create a strong demand for " Miscellaneous Writings " which, in the first eight years of its existence, went through sixty-two editions and by itself produced a small fortune.

As the cult for the leader, who now assumed the title of Mother, grew with the increase in Church membership and with the seclusion in which she lived,

other ways presented themselves of increasing the revenues flowing into the bank account of the Pastor Emeritus. The Christian Science Souvenir Company in Concord made suitable emblems for the faithful, who could wear Mrs. Eddy's favourite flower on their links, their watches, their brooches. They could also pay the tribute to matter which all healthy persons do more or less willingly, by eating with Christian Science spoons. These could be obtained in various sizes, though the largest, selling at five dollars, was that most recommended. This, called the Mother Spoon, carried an embossed portrait of the leader, a picture of her house and over her signature the text: "Not Matter but Mind Signifieth." How better could a Scientist realize the illusion of food than by eating it with such a spoon? That Mrs. Eddy thought it not without significance was shown by the notice she inserted in the *Journal*: "On each of these most beautiful spoons is a motto in bas-relief that every person on earth needs to hold in thought. Mother requests that Christian Scientists shall not ask to be informed what this motto is, but each Scientist shall purchase at least one spoon and those who can afford it one dozen spoons, that their families may read this motto at every meal and their guests be made partakers of its simple truth." And there was also her portrait, a composite photograph perfected after months of labour. This Mrs. Eddy did not order all Christian Scientists to buy. But her words in the *Journal*, "I simply ask all those who love me to purchase this portrait," were enough.

Mrs. Eddy, now an old lady of over seventy, was loved and revered by thousands who were ready to do much more for her than buy her photograph. And beyond the rapidly growing battalions of Christian Scientists, the millions of her compatriots knew of her success. She had begun to be a figure of national importance. More, indeed; she had become a character, and a character with power, who by a word could make a man's fortune. When the *Granite*

Monthly of Concord printed her poem " Easter Morn " and eulogistically commented upon it, she asked all Christian Scientists to subscribe to that periodical. The same request for the Washington *Newsletter*, a political paper which had written in defence of Christian Science because a Congress-man on its black books had attacked it, enabled its editor to turn the paper into a flourishing religious magazine. Mrs. Eddy suffered the penalty of fame in being asked her opinion on the topics of the hour. Sometimes at times of national crisis she addressed her followers. Her panegyric on the death of President McKinley ended with this aspiration : " May his history waken a tone of truth that shall reverberate, renew euphony, emphasize human power and bear its banner into the vast forever." The message led *Harper's Magazine* to say that " Mother Eddy's style " was a personal asset, for her sentences had the considerable literary merit of being unexpected, a judgment which the *Christian Science Journal* reproduced as a well-merited tribute to the leader's utterances from an old-established and valuable publication.

Some might smile. The apotheosis was nevertheless a fact, as pragmatical America—taking success as its touchstone—had to admit. In 1893 the women of the United States gave her the accolade as a Daughter of the American Revolution. To thousands there was no hyperbole in the motto that ran on the cover of the hebdomadal *Christian Science Sentinel*, younger brother to the monthly *Journal* :

> A lady with a lamp shall stand
> In the great history of our land
> A noble type of good,
> Heroic womanhood.

It seemed to outsiders, and even to those within the fold, that a triumphant, if stormy, career had now reached its golden autumn, and the agreeable surroundings of Pleasant View, its open unfenced garden, its sunny rooms looking out over the New Hampshire hills, symbolized the peace and love that dwelt within.

Yet the founder of Christian Science had grasped success only to find it worthless to a lonely old woman such as she knew herself to be. Love, she believed, had been her beacon throughout life, and now when thousands professed to love her, she ached for it in vain. She had no one near her whom she did not in her heart despise. "Bennie", for whom she felt at one time so warm an affection, had gone the way of all other favourites. She had raised him up until he had become manager of the Publication Office in Boston, the most lucrative post in Science, the appointment being the more congenial to her since she had stipulated for a higher royalty on "Science and Health", a dollar and a half per copy instead of the dollar she had previously taken. But in Boston Dr. Foster-Eddy had roused jealousies. As the heir-apparent many courted this Crown Prince and his enemies were not slow to take reports of his behaviour to his adopted mother. He had fallen into dandyish ways; he wore a larger diamond ring than that which Mrs. Eddy had given him; he did not look after his accounts properly; worst of all he made himself too agreeable to lady scientists, and specially to one of his assistants. . . . So the gossip ran, till Mrs. Eddy banished him to Philadelphia with orders to found a Church there. There a letter made it clear that his sonship was ended. "Dear Doctor," it ran ominously, "I have silenced every word of the slander started in Boston about that woman by saying that I had not the least idea of any wrong conduct between you and her, for I know you are chaste", and the signature was no longer "Mother" but "Mary Baker Eddy". The Doctor soon discovered that the Philadelphians did not want a fallen favourite, and he returned to Boston to lay himself and his woes at his adopted mother's feet; but he found little comfort and the end of this spiritual union of mother and son ended in Mrs. Eddy accusing Dr. Foster-Eddy of having "his mind on her", in other words of his being a mesmerist.

Whether Dr. Foster-Eddy had been pulled down because he came too near the throne, or whether Mrs. Eddy had acted against her inclinations, as there is some evidence to show, she was only learning the lesson that leadership carries with it the penalty of loneliness. Her isolation grew greater as year after year she went on cementing the power of the Mother Church and tightening its hold over what was known as " the Field ", until she had built up a more highly centralized organization than any other religious body in the world, not excepting the Society of Jesus. Step by step she removed every possible source of friction that could impair the smooth running of the machine, or the completeness of her own rule. As she looked round on the flourishing Christian Science Churches in the great cities of America, each under its own pastor, she saw the potential danger of schism that lay in the pastorate as an institution. So in 1895 she " ordained the Bible and ' Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures ' as the Pastor, on this planet, of all the Churches of the Christian Science Denomination " and the pastors found their occupation gone. Instead, there were to be two Readers, the first of the Bible, the second of " Science and Health ". Henceforth preaching in Christian Science Churches was forbidden, and the most obvious way any worker had of obtaining personal influence was swept aside. It is but one more tribute to the power of this extraordinary woman that this stringent decree met everywhere with unquestioning obedience, in New York, as in Denver and Chicago.

And still she had doubts. A by-law of the Mother Church laid it down that Readers must not be leaders in the Church, but this could not prevent them from being popular with their congregations, a conspicuous example being before her eyes in the First Reader of the Mother Church. So another by-law enacted that Readers should only hold their place for three years, an order at first specifically restricted to the Mother Church. Some substitute had to be found

for the abolished pulpit, and lecturers were therefore sent out to encourage the faithful and to convert the ignorant and the doubtful. But their activities, too, were carefully circumscribed. They had to receive a licence from the Board of Directors, which was renewable annually, and to submit their lectures to the censorship of the Board. And to avoid any danger of their establishing a personal following, they were forbidden to speak in Church or even to attend any reception after their discourse, being bidden then by Mrs. Eddy's own injunctions to " depart in quiet thought ".

The business-like control which runs through the whole organization of Christian Science Mrs. Eddy centred in the aptly named Board of Directors. But if Mrs. Eddy was neither President nor a member of the Board, contenting herself with the modest title of Pastor Emeritus, the reason was that she preferred the reality to the semblance of power. For the members of the Board were her nominees, who could be dismissed any time at her request, and no vacancy could be filled without her approval. Board meetings were secret ; its members were not only under the obligation of keeping their joint discussions to themselves, they were forbidden also to tell each other of any communications they might have with Mrs. Eddy. All other appointments in the Church similarly needed Mrs. Eddy's sanction, and she could remove any of its officers, including Readers of Branch Churches, by the simple exercise of her prerogative. The authority of the Mother Church to the ends of the earth was more tightly secured by forbidding any conferences of Branch Churches, all of which had to conform with the most scrupulous uniformity to the services as prescribed by the by-laws of the Mother Church.

This triumph of organization answered immediately to the guiding hand of the frail old lady in Concord ; in great things, as in small, her fiat went forth through the mouthpiece of the Board ; she had but to speak

and her followers obeyed. She followed the policy of depressing the teachers at the expense of the healers, upon whom rested the brunt of the battle, and in these later years she took pains to prevent her healers from coming into collision with the law, advising them not to handle contagious, or infectious cases, to be cautious about treating malignant diseases, and to call in a medical practitioner when the circumstances required it. She also ordered all her followers to submit to vaccination when such was the law, and they were allowed to sit in the dentist's chair without being considered backsliders. Questions of policy preoccupied her to the end, one of her last actions being to order the publication of a daily paper, now the world-famous *Christian Science Monitor*. With such greater decisions there went out others of less import. One of these required Christian Scientists to belong to no clubs or societies, Masonic Lodges excepted, which were confined to one sex. Another "abolished" Santa Claus. By a third any Christian Scientist, if so ordered by the Board of Directors, was required to give up his whole time in personal service to the leader.

Policy apart, there remained the necessity of watching every wheel in the mechanism. Mrs. Eddy had always possessed that quality of leadership which consists in being able to sacrifice personal predilections to larger issues, and she kept this to the end. In the 'nineties there had been the break with Mrs. Woodrow, who had headed an æsthetic movement within the fold. The eccentricities of this favourite lieutenant in attempting to superimpose a layer of French culture upon the austerities of Science aroused Mrs. Eddy's suspicions, and when ultimately Mrs. Woodrow gave birth to a child which she asserted Mrs. Eddy had foretold would be the Prince of Peace, her expulsion became necessary. Mrs. Woodrow riposted by attacking her former leader in the best polemical style, with the result that she grew to be one of Mrs. Eddy's most dangerous mesmerists.

The case of Augusta Stetson, whom Mrs. Eddy had originally called to do a great work in Divine Science, stood on a different plane. For over twenty years she had been the ablest worker in the field and in New York she held a position of eminence to which her talents and zeal entitled her. Never had Mrs. Eddy called forth more devoted and gushing sentiments of devotion than those which Mrs. Stetson unceasingly reiterated, and Mrs. Eddy on her side had shown Mrs. Stetson many marks of her favour over a long period. They corresponded in poetry and prose. Once, for instance, Mrs. Stetson sent her leader a canary with a poem which began:

> If a little bird may say
> What is in the heart to-day
> I would say, "a song of glee
> Motherhood of God for thee."

Mrs. Eddy returned it with another little lyric in serious vein:

> I have loved and lost—ah! what—
> Many a joy, but once a bird
> Who did love me . . .

ran the second stanza, but the third left no doubt of her feelings towards Mrs. Stetson:

> I have never told my grief,
> Yet can never love another,
> But your bird-prayer God may grant
> Who has given you bird and "Mother".

These verses enabled Mrs. Stetson to say, in a letter of thanks, that she could no longer fear the misrepresentations of the foe would separate them.

But that was early in her New York pastorate. As time passed and Mrs. Stetson's position in that great city grew, whispers went abroad that she was aiming at establishing a hegemony of the New York Churches, preparatory to taking up the sceptre when it fell from Mrs. Eddy's grasp. In vain Mrs. Stetson protested that she had no such intention, that Mrs. Eddy would never die, that she would always remain

her loyal child. Jealous students kept the gossip alive. It reached the Press. Mrs. Stetson wrote to Mrs. Eddy letter after letter of the most frantic devotion. She complimented her on the final edition of "Science and Health", saying that "great chemicalization in universal and individual consciousness" had followed that revision, in which its authoress had specially engaged a reader "to repulse the persistent attacks being made on its grammar". She was never tired of reiterating that through Mrs. Eddy spoke the voice of Father-Mother God. But Mrs. Eddy dropped into an ominous silence. And when she learnt in 1908 that Mrs. Stetson projected building a great Christian Science Church on Riverside Drive, the *Christian Science Sentinel* published what Mrs. Stetson has described as a "misleading editorial" condemning the proposal. Into the details of a dispute which led to Mrs. Stetson's suspension for three years it is unnecessary to enter. Suffice it to say that to her former friend Mrs. Eddy's last communication, eighteen months before her death, was a curt note of a few lines telling her to "awake and arise from this temptation produced by animal magnetism upon yourself, allowing your students to deify you and me".

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She had fought and conquered every enemy except one, and there were many in Science who believed that her withdrawal from the world would be the prelude to making the supreme demonstration. On the very rare occasions when she appeared in public the youthful beauty of her features seemed significant; as she entered on her ninetieth year in apparent health, taking her drive every day and ruling the Church which had now spread over both hemispheres, her sanguine followers might well have thought that she would rise victorious over matter.

Very different was the reality as it disclosed itself

to those in immediate attendance upon her. Their faith was not less than others, but they knew, as outsiders could not, that her apparent triumph cloaked a daily and deadly struggle with M.A.M. in which she had her back to the wall. At Pleasant View and Chestnut Hill, outside Boston, where she moved in 1907, the boundless devotion of her household was enveloped in an atmosphere of fear. Mesmerism concentrated its currents upon them all. As she continually reminded them, those who served her came under a line of malpractice such as existed nowhere else upon earth. Adam H. Dickey, the last of her secretaries, has related his astonishment when he discovered this fact on his first entry into the leader's household, for he had " always imagined that Mrs. Eddy lived quietly, as any other elderly woman would do, surrounded by comforts and luxuries". He found it out on his first morning at breakfast, when Mrs. Eddy's companion, Laura Sargent, asked pointedly whether he had been delayed by much snow on his journey. To Mr. Dickey's reply that nearly all the way from Kansas the country had been enveloped in a blanket of snow, Calvin Frye, her factotum since Mr. Eddy's death, said pointedly: " We must tell Mother about this." Then they explained to Mr. Dickey that Mrs. Eddy had an aversion to heavy snowfalls, which she considered the damaging results of error, but that the workers in her household felt they might be excused their failure to control the snow if Mrs. Eddy were informed that the storm had not been confined to New England. He was further enlightened later the same morning. At his first interview with Mrs. Eddy she had seemed pleased that he had not come into Christian Science in search of health and that both his parents and his eight brothers and sisters were all alive. At a second interview, after she had decided that he would make a suitable secretary, she told him that she had " many enemies " and had much to counter by way of " aggressive mental suggestions, intended to injure

her physically". It seemed a startling disclosure, but Mr. Dickey's faith enabled him to accept it.

So he took his place in the household of which he has left an intimate description, a household that had no thoughts, no interests, except those emanating from the little old lady, with the clear complexion, the bright eyes, the beautifully modulated voice, who dressed so neatly and made such elegant gestures with her small, carefully tended hands. They lived her life. They breakfasted at seven, dined at twelve, supped at seven, and for the rest of the day had to be ready to answer any summons from the leader. "Never desert your post" was one of her maxims, and workers when not required, were expected to wait in their bed-sitting rooms (with bath adjoining) until summoned by the bell to Mrs. Eddy's presence. Each had his own call; when all the bells throughout the house rang at the same time, the dozen or so members of her spiritual family would hastily repair to her study, where they would stand in line ready to receive the rebuke which they had earned. They stood there like obedient students, reverently awaiting the words from lips which they knew spoke with a wisdom the world had not known for 1900 years.

"You are not doing your work as you should and I shall not instruct you further until you have demonstrated something more of what has been taught you. It would be a poor teacher that would take students up into the higher branches of mathematics before they had proved subtraction, multiplication and division. Therefore, until you demonstrate in better fashion what you have been taught, I shall teach you no more." Thus ran one little homily, by which Mrs. Eddy hoped to get better work from her staff. The simplicity of their faith attained the sublime. They knew they were surrounded by error, but they could not discern it, for the power to do this was confined to Mrs. Eddy. But they did their best, aware that every conceivable form of mental warfare was turned against her, and that all the efforts of the

mind workers often could not shield her. They worked to a "watch", prepared by the secretary at Mrs. Eddy's dictation, and consisting of typewritten sheets containing in order the names or the descriptions of the types of error which they had to handle. Armed with a copy of these each worker went on guard outside Mrs. Eddy's bedroom door, the watch being relieved throughout the night at two hour intervals. She was particularly liable to suffering when worried by some question of Church government, and this would continue until the Board of Directors had duly passed a by-law intended to remedy the matter at issue. At such times she knew she was a scapegoat for the sins of the people, that the needs of the movement made themselves felt in her own body, and she never wearied of quoting the verses of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."

A scapegoat she was, yet this did not prevent her from visiting her displeasure upon the workers when bad nights came to her. Upon one such occasion she called and recalled them three times. "If you keep your watch well", she said, "I will be a well woman. . . . You must rise to the point where you can destroy the belief in mesmerism. Unless it is done the cause will perish and we will go along another nineteen hundred years with the world sunk into the blackest night." She turned to each and said: "Will you keep your watch?" and each answered "Yes." "To keep your watch", she added, "does not mean to be awake at that hour and to be working mentally. It means to succeed in breaking the mesmerism for the hours assigned."

She had many causes for dissatisfaction. She often told her workers how she had dissipated thunderclouds by looking at them and by bringing to bear upon them mortal mind's concept of this manifestation of discord that God has really prepared for us. Such power lay beyond the capabilities of the simple-minded souls around her, and in spite of Mrs. Eddy's

injunctions that snowfalls should be put a stop to, these manifestations of error continued. A crisis occurred on January 15, 1910, when Mrs. Eddy ordered them to make a law that there should be no more snow that winter. Hardly had the fiat gone forth when a heavy fall caused the bells throughout the house to tinkle. The workers assemble before their leader. She turned to Mr. Dickey, who, as secretary, held the post of honour, and asked him: "Mr. Dickey, can a Christian Scientist control the weather?" "Yes, Mother," was his reply. The others, asked in turn, answered similarly. Then, in Mr. Dickey's own words an expression of rejection, not to say of scorn, came upon her face, and she said with emphasis: "They can't and they don't," an affirmation greeted with a look of surprise by all the members of the party, since they had just been instructed "how to take care of the weather".

It was disheartening to be surrounded by such instruments. If she could have found one person spiritually equipped she would have immediately placed the government of the Church in his hands. As it was, she had no one on whom she could rely. "My home", she wrote to her son, "is simply a house and a beautiful landscape. There is not one in it that I love, only as I love everybody. I have no congeniality with my help inside my house; they are no companions and scarcely fit to be my help." She went on to tell him of the disappointment that Dr. Foster-Eddy had been, and described Mr. Calvin Frye as "the most disagreeable man that can be found". The "severest wound of all" was the want of education amongst those nearest to her in kin. Blood was thicker than water, thicker even than spiritual affinity, but it could not bridge ignorance. "If you had been educated as I intended to have you," she observed, "to-day you could, would, be made President of the United States." But as things were, her granddaughter Mary spelt so shockingly that she blushed to read her letters. The fault was her father's

because he mispronounced his words to such an extent that Mary could not possibly guess how they ought to be written. Yet this letter to George, when she was eighty-seven, shows that all worldly satisfaction was not denied her. "My life is as pure as that of the angels . . . I am alone in the world, more lonely than a solitary star. Although it is duly estimated by business characters that I am obeyed by 300,000 people at this date. The most distinguished newspapers ask me to write upon the most important subjects. Lords and ladies, earls, princes and marquises and marchionesses from abroad write to me in the most complimentary manner. Hoke Smith declares I am the most illustrious woman on the continent. Our senators and members of Congress call on me for counsel. But what is all this? I am not made the least proud of it or a particle happier for it. I am working for a higher purpose."

The litigation with her son proved the last of the many suits in which she had been engaged, his claim that his mother was subject to undue influence being settled by her giving him a quarter of a million dollars. A fifth of that sum was settled at the same time on Dr. Foster-Eddy, the adopted son who had passed out of her life many years before. At the end her favourite was Adam Dickey, and with him she liked to go back to the incidents of her childhood, telling him stories of her father and the neighbours at Bow eighty years before. Often for days, and even weeks, the clouds would lift and existence at Chestnut Hill pursue a halcyon course. At such times she would be the most charming person in the world. Then the workers would have opportunity for recreation and they could go out in the confidence that the bells would not suddenly begin their general tintinnabulation. During these serene intervals Mrs. Eddy would be graciousness itself, condescending so far as to subscribe to the local hospital. Once when she had instructed her secretary to send such a cheque, she added: "I don't know why I am doing this, but

I presume it is to please my friends." At such times, too, she would return good for evil, as by sending a basket of fruit to her neighbour who had been spying upon her with a field-glass. And if Mrs. Eddy could rebuke her students, the same love that prompted the correction—"I do love you," she said to one woman student who had burst into tears and asked for Mrs. Eddy's love, "and that is why I am talking to you like that. If I did not love you I would not take the time to correct you"—prompted many generosities. Like so many other strong characters, Mrs. Eddy gathered persons of mediocre calibre around her. She paid the necessary penalty in feeling that they did not really know her, and she often said that those students who had been with her longest understood her the least. This did not prevent her from rewarding them with gifts of money and jewellery, and what was more valued, of accompanying such gifts with the smile and the softly modulated sentiment which melted the hearts of these disciples of both sexes, who were encouraged by the thought that they were filling some of the most important positions that could be assigned to humankind. Then quiet days would draw to a quiet close, and Mr. Dickey would be summoned to her study to sit by her in the twilight whilst she looked out on the road that ran at the bottom of the garden, where the lights of the passing traffic were visible, and told him anecdotes, grave and gay, of the distant past to which her childish memory went back.

Always the work continued and the letters flowed in from all over the world. The Secretary read them to her and when they were suitable for reproduction in the *Sentinel* she initialled them. Some were suggested emendations of the text of "Science and Health" and her other books, which she often followed. Even when she thought that her correspondent took too much upon herself, as in the case of an English woman who called attention to the epithets "beer-bulged, surly censor" in "Miscellaneous Writ-

ings " conflicting with the spirit of Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy made the alteration. But sometimes this life-long amateur of words, who as a girl had called a poem " Alphabet and Bayonet ", stood firm and showed that despite her eighty-eight years she was still their lord and master. Some purist had pointed out that " hecatombs of gushing theories " in " Science and Health " contained a mixed metaphor and Mr. Dickey, after looking up hecatombs in the dictionary, agreed. Mrs. Eddy, however, would not have it so. " No, Mr. Dickey," she said, " I will make no alteration in that word. People do not always understand my sense of humour. The word conveys exactly the sense I wish to present, namely that a great slaughter of gushing theories, stereotyped borrowed speeches and the doting of arguments are but so many parodies on Christian Science." Mrs. Eddy was always wonderful to her secretary, and not least so when, on his reading her one of her own poems from the collected edition which was about to be published, he found the tears streaming down her face and she explained that she had written it on the death of her husband. He has recorded, too, how he read her the letter of a grateful reader of the first edition of " Science and Health ", and she told him to put the letter aside, saying : " No one will ever know what it cost me to write that book."

No one, she believed, knew what it was costing her to hold her position in the forefront of the deadly conflict in which she was engaged. For suddenly the old tension would return and the leader, entering upon another round with her inexorable antagonist, would pass on something of the anguish of her " beliefs " to the workers attending her. Once she called them into her room and quoting from Macbeth, " Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased," added : " I am now working on a plane which would mean instantaneous death to any of you." Death—that was the grim illusionist who would not be exorcised. Even the Press were not above hinting that she had

already passed beyond the pale, and on two occasions the old lady was forced to the indignity of receiving a bevy of reporters to give them ocular proof to the contrary.

To still the tongue of rumour against every inclination of her weary body, she forced herself to take her daily drive, and it speaks for the splendour of her courage that she managed to do this until two days before the end. The cost was terrible. Once at least the curtain lifted to show us how terrible. Mr. Dickey has related that he found her seated in a chair, dressed for her drive, painfully pulling on her gloves. " Mr. Dickey," she said, " I want you to know that it does me good to go on this drive. I do not mean the physical going for a drive does me good, but the enemy have made a law that it hurts me to go on this drive and they are trying to enforce it, while I want you to take the opposite view with God and know that every act I perform in His service does me good. I do not take the drive for recreation but because I want to establish my domination over mortal mind's antagonistic beliefs."

M.A.M., mesmerism, malpractice—its currents could not be warded off. Death hemmed her in. At any moment the dread visitant might touch her with his wand. When her coachman died in his sleep, she added two lines to the Chapter on Christian Science Practice in " Science and Health ". " Christian Scientists, be a law to yourselves that mental malpractice can harm you neither when asleep nor when awake." As she explained it to Mr. Dickey, she had discovered a new form of malpractice never known before, which was, that evil tried to produce sudden death in sleep. Her own powers manifested themselves in their fullness when she brought Calvin Frye from beyond the portals of life. One evening they had discovered him insensible in his room and though Mrs. Eddy had retired, they decided she must be told. Mrs. Sargent was ordered by Mrs. Eddy to have Calvin Frye carried to her bedroom. The workers stood around as,

sitting up in bed, she put her hand on his shoulder and said: "Calvin, Calvin, wake up. It is Mother who calls you. Wake up, Calvin. This Cause needs you. Mother needs you and you must not leave. You shall not go. I need you here. Disappoint your enemies, Calvin, and awake." For half an hour Calvin Frye lay there limp and motionless, whilst the workers stood round and waited for the miracle to happen. Mrs. Eddy by now was "fairly shouting her commands" to the unconscious man, who finally shuddered and drew breath. "I don't want to stay, I want to go," he moaned. "Just listen to that," said Mrs. Eddy, and in commanding tones she ordered that her servant should live. The next morning he was going about his accustomed duties.

Such a proof of power might lead them to suppose further wonderful victories—if only the mesmerists had been less deadly in their hatred. Mr. Eddy had been mentally murdered, and she did not disguise from herself that the same fate was reserved for her. So one day, it was August 25, 1908, she sent for Mr. Dickey, and when he answered her summons ordered Mrs. Sargent and Calvin Frye, who were in the room, to leave them alone. Then, taking his hands in hers, she asked in a deep, earnest voice: "Mr. Dickey, I want you to promise me something, will you?" Mr. Dickey replied that he certainly would. "Well," she went on, "if ever I should leave here—do you know what I mean by that?" Mr. Dickey signified his assent and she repeated: "If ever I should leave here, will you promise me that you will write a history of what has transpired in your experience with me and say I was mentally murdered?" Mrs. Eddy's manner was one of "solemn intensity and eagerness" and she then and there made him swear before God that nothing should interfere with his keeping of this promise.

She had triumphed. She had impressed her personality upon the world, she commanded obedience from thousands, she was rich, respected, a national figure.

The poor widow of Tilton who had been forced to live upon the charity of her relations had founded a movement which had spread over the Protestant world. As she looked back, she could not help feeling the satisfaction of achievement. " I briefly declare ", she wrote a few months before the end, " that nothing has occurred in my life's experience which, if correctly narrated and understood, could injure me ; and not a little is already reported of the good accomplished therein, the self-sacrifice, etc., that has distinguished all my working years." Yet did the consciousness of failure, of the emptiness of life haunt her, as it does others who have reached the goal ? " I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit. For that which befalleth the sons of man befalleth beasts ; as the one dieth so dieth the other ; all are of dust and all turn to dust again." She had preached the omnipotence of Love, and now, enmeshed in a web of hate, she knew not when she would be claimed as its victim. Did doubts of the adequacy of her revelation pass through that old brain as her bodily strength ebbed away under the attacks, as she believed, which the mesmerists unceasingly made upon her ? Was hate more powerful than love, was evil still to triumph ? She had denied evil, denied suffering, denied death, hailed Love as the only reality. Yet in spite of her denials and affirmations, the grave yawned at her feet. And since to suffer was not a mark of the divine favour, not an acknowledgment of the many-sidedness of truth, but homage paid to evil, there was no comfort in the journey that loomed before her. Hate had pursued her to the end and when she had at last fallen a victim to its spells, her most earnest desire was that her murder should be made known to all.

Yet the end, when it came to her on December 3, 1910, within six months of her ninetieth birthday, was peaceful. She told those around her that she suffered not at all and Dr. West, who in pursuance of the Law

viewed the body and gave a medical certificate that death was due to natural causes, remarked on the beauty of her features as she lay in death. "The entire countenance bore a placid, serene expression, which could not have been sweeter had the woman fallen away in sleep in the midst of pleasant thoughts. I do not recall ever seeing in death before a face which bore such a beautiful tranquil expression."

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